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Are you risking
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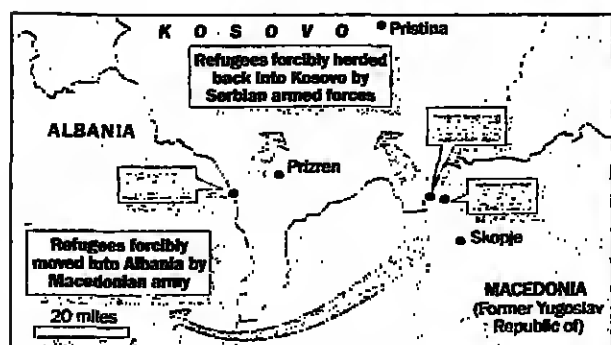
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'The Macedonians worked even faster than the Serbs to get these people out of their country'



Refugees moved at dead of night



A doll, family albums, passports: all went under the bulldozer at Blace, reports Daniel McGrory

THE United Nations led the condemnation yesterday of a midnight raid by Macedonian troops to evict forcibly 30,000 refugees from their makeshift camp on the border.

And there was further alarm as the Serbs suddenly closed their borders at Blace and Jazince, ordering thousands of ethnic Albanians back to their homes in Kosovo. Nato officers fear they will now be used as human shields against allied attacks.

At Blace, aid workers described how Macedonian soldiers spread through the camp tearing down tents and dragging families on to buses that were then driven across the neighbouring border.

In the frightened mêlée, parents were separated from children and most were prevented from bringing even the few possessions they salvaged when they fled Kosovo.

The UNHCR called this evacuation brutal and a fundamental violation of human rights. "You do not move people at dead of night without telling anyone where they are going and split up families in the haste to tip them out of your country," an official said.

As dawn rose over what had suddenly become a ghost camp there was ample and poignant evidence of how ruthlessly these thousands of Kosovo Albanians were moved. A child's doll lay trampled in the mud. Passports and documents were strewn among a tangle of clothes and in the mud were obviously treasured keepsakes such as a family photo album and letters. Jars of baby food sat open on tables made from cardboard boxes. Meals were half-eaten, a radio

was still playing and a leather jacket hung from a tree.

A worker with the Islamic charity El Hilal said: "The soldiers just stormed the camp. Children were screaming. Some refugees tried to escape and troops fired over the heads and hauled them back to the buses, beating them with their rifles. We were not allowed to help them."

He said that Serb troops hiding in an abandoned frontier village became embroiled and grabbed some of the refugees back on to their side of a border marked by the railway line that was used 11 days ago to expel these refugees.

The eviction was over within seven hours. Christopher Thomas of the American Red Cross said: "The Macedonian soldiers worked even faster than the Serbs to get these people out of their country."

But senior Macedonian Government officials accused NATO countries of hypocrisy, saying: "You complained when we didn't move the refugees quickly enough and now you criticise us when we do empty that camp."

The Macedonian President, Kiro Gligorov, was also unrepentant, saying: "This was the right thing to do. Albania is their native land, and it should accept the refugees and the international community should help to get them there."

Standing on the edge of the deserted camp yesterday, Major-General John Drevienkiewicz, acting head of the Org-

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Deserted village: belongings salvaged by refugees as they fled Kosovo lie abandoned after their second eviction from Blace

Mersey dash to save US prisoners

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

THE three American soldiers captured by Serb forces and being held as POWs could be freed today after a surprise intervention by a veteran Cypriot politician. Spyros Kyprinou, the parliamentary president, expects to fly to Belgrade this morning after declaring that he was confident he could secure their release.

He has been in close contact with the Serbian leadership and, if successful, hopes to return with them to Cyprus.

"I believe, I hope my mission will succeed," he said as he left for Athens where Greece has provided a plane for Belgrade.

His original schedule called for him to fly Belgrade last night but the Greek Govern-

ment was told by Washington that it was impossible for any commercial planes to enter Yugoslavian airspace because of Nato's bombardment.

The gesture by the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, came a day after Nato brushed aside his offer of a ceasefire for the Orthodox Easter this weekend. Freeing the Americans would remove the huge public outcry in the United States.

The three, which Nato says were non-combat troops, were seized near the border between Macedonia and Kosovo. Belgrade threatened to put them on trial as spies but later said it would free them when the bombing ended.

WHERE TO SEND YOUR MONEY

£5 million was donated in the first 24 hours of an appeal by 12 British aid charities who have united under the auspices of the Disasters Emergency Committee to help the Kosovan refugees. Other charities have also received thousands of pounds. All are seeking money rather than goods.

Disasters Emergency Committee
Phone lines: 0870 6060900 and 0990 222233
Cheques: Kosovo Crisis Appeal, PO Box 999, London EC4A 9AA.

Refaid:
Phone line: 01732 520111
Cheques: Refaid-Kosovo Appeal, UK for UNHCR, 21st floor, Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London SW1 4QP.

Action Against Hunger:
Phone line: 0171-242 5665
Postal address: Action Against Hunger UK, 1 Canon Street, London WC1R 4AB.
Donations may also be made at banks and post offices.

Government U-turn on Pill warning

BY HELEN RUMBELOW

THE Government has made a U-turn on its advice on contraceptive pills, four years after health warnings caused panic and led to an estimated 30,000 abortions.

Jeremy Metters, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer, said yesterday the abortions were "regretted". The Government released new guidelines reversing the 1995 safety alert when it warned women and GPs that the leading "third generation" brand of pills were so risky they should not be taken unless absolutely necessary.

The alarm affected about two million women, half of all British women taking oral contraceptives. Twelve per cent immediately stopped taking the pill and abortions, which had been on the decline, rose by 9 per cent that year and are continuing to rise.

Medical experts and manufacturers blamed the Government for the sensational health scare which was based on evidence that had yet to be

published. The research had found that women taking third generation pills, which contain the progestogens called desogestrel or gestodene, were about twice as likely as those on other pills to have blood clots in their legs, but the risk was still very small - 25 women in 100,000.

Those statistics were called into doubt and after appeals from the drug manufacturers the Committee of Safety on Medicines (CSM) reconsidered. Dr Metters said that the risks remained the same as in 1995 but they were very small and as long as women were informed of them they could be prescribed the third generation pills as their first choice.

"Of course I regret unnecessary abortions. But the CSM gave the advice they thought was right at the time. It was important that women should be told exactly what the risks were. If we had sat on the data there would have been a national outcry."



"It's like spot-the-ball but harder"

Police tackle runaways

Twelve players from Ivory Coast's under-19 rugby team have gone on the run apparently in the hope of staying in Britain. Police in South Wales say they are hopeful of finding them because they have only a smattering of English, and are believed to be wearing their navy blue team track suits.

Man of 61 admits Mardi bombings

BY RICHARD DUCE AND ADAM FRESCO

A MAN aged 61 admitted yesterday that he was the Mardi Gra bomber who waged a 3½-year campaign across London and the Home Counties.

Edgar Pearce, a former advertising employee from Chiswick, West London, tried to extort millions of pounds from Barclays Bank and Sainsbury's as he planned 36 devices, the Old Bailey was told.

The bombs contained pins and ball bearings. By the time his campaign was brought to an end, six people were injured and only luck stopped anyone from being killed. The cost to Sainsbury's is estimated at £640,000 in lost trade. Barclays spent £140,000 on extra security.

The bombs became more sophisticated as Pearce's campaign developed, and police regarded him to be as dangerous as the IRA. The devices were first delivered to bank branches from December 1994 and later left outside Sainsbury's supermarkets. Pearce's

demands were open-ended with no time limit set on how long the blackmail would continue. He hoped to use cash-point machines to receive up to £10,000 each day. In the end, he had withdrawn £700 when he was trapped. He will be sentenced in a few days.

Detective Chief Superintendent Jeffrey Rice, from the Organised Crime Group, said: "This was a callous, calculating individual who was wholly indifferent to the possibility that the devices might cause death or serious injuries."

Pearce admitted 20 charges, involving blackmail attempts, the possession of explosives and wounding. Charges against his brother Ronald, 67, were dropped. Ronald admitted possessing a stun gun but the prosecution accepted he played no part in the extortion. He was sentenced to 12 months but released because of time he has spent in prison.

Full story, pages 2 & 3



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The calling card Pearce left on his first six bombs

- Only he knew store cards were cash cards
- He told police to give them away in magazine
- He knew the Pin codes

Cash machine ploy gave police the upper hand

EDGAR PEARCE, the Mardi Gra bomber, was defeated by a high-technology police operation involving the kind of manpower formerly reserved for dealing with the IRA.

Pearce, 61, believed he had developed a foolproof plan to extort money from Barclays Bank, and then the Sainsbury's supermarket chain, after making their branches the target of a succession of home-made bomb attacks. He hit upon the idea of extorting money using the national network of automatic cash dispensers.

Pearce insisted that promotional plastic cards be placed inside a national magazine. Only he knew that the cards could be used in a cashpoint machine, and the personal identification number.

On December 27, 1997, police placed a brief entry in the personal column of *The Daily Telegraph* reading: "Mr. Work will be completed and ready for London circulation on Thursday 26th March 1998. This is the earliest possible date. Hope it meets your schedule, G."

It was the breakthrough the police had been waiting for. They set up electronic monitoring of hundreds of cash machines across London in the hope that the bomber would pay one of them a visit. The

HOW THE BOMBER WAS CAUGHT

Stewart Tendler, Richard Duce and Adam Fresco on the problems faced by investigators

bombings, however, did not stop and in January and February there were further attacks on Sainsbury's stores in West and South London.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve, head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch and a veteran of IRA bombing inquiries, later admitted he was so worried that the bomber would eventually kill someone that he would lie awake in a cold sweat.

As the cat and mouse game with Pearce continued, police began to set in train the plan, Operation Heath, that would lead to his capture and conviction at the Old Bailey.

Sainsbury's had improved its closed-circuit television cameras and increased uniformed and undercover patrols. However, Pearce had always eluded them by making sure that his face was never captured on camera.

Surveillance was so intense that police broke a drugs smuggling operation when

they saw two men unloading boxes from a van into a car in Sainsbury's car park at Chiswick. The car was stopped and found to be carrying £1 million of cannabis resin. Two men, one of them a retired RAF officer, were subsequently jailed.

On March 17, another bomb exploded in Ealing, southeast London, soon after two mothers had walked past pushing their babies in prams. Pearce was captured on camera, only for the second time in the three-year bombing campaign, but again his face could not be seen.

On April 17, police, with the co-operation of Sainsbury's, set their trap with a further announcement in *The Daily Telegraph*, stating simply: "Everything on schedule."

Sainsbury's printed 50,000 special reward cards that were inserted into a promotion in the southeast edition of *Exchange & Mart*. They paid £20,000 into an account from

which thousands could be withdrawn each day. At the same time the police electronically linked hundreds of cash machines to a special centre at Scotland Yard, codenamed Central 500, from which many of the big anti-IRA operations were normally run. Closed-circuit television cameras were also rigged up.

Under Operation Heath, the Yard planned to deploy more than 400 officers to keep watch across West and South London each day. Officers were brought in from the specialist squads and help was sought in every part of the capital.

As soon as a card was used, Central 500 would get the address and alert the nearest team. Every officer was shown the closed-circuit television film of Pearce planting the bomb so that they knew his approximate build and height.

The cards could be used for seven days only. For four days nothing happened, and the Operation Heath team began to despair. Then, on day five, April 28, there were two withdrawals. Police rushed to the addresses in West London, but he had gone.

A few hours later the alarm in the control room went off again. Cash was being withdrawn from a machine at

TRAIL OF THE MARDI GRA BOMBER

- 1994
- 3) Dec 8: Barclays Bank, Hammersmith, North London
 - 4) Dec 8: Barclays Bank, Leamington Grove, West London
 - 5) Dec 8: Barclays Bank, Hammersmith, West London
 - 6) Dec 8: Barclays Bank, Gloucester Rd, West London
 - 7) Dec 8: Barclays Bank, Kensington, London
 - 8) Dec 8: Barclays Bank, Fiddlington, London

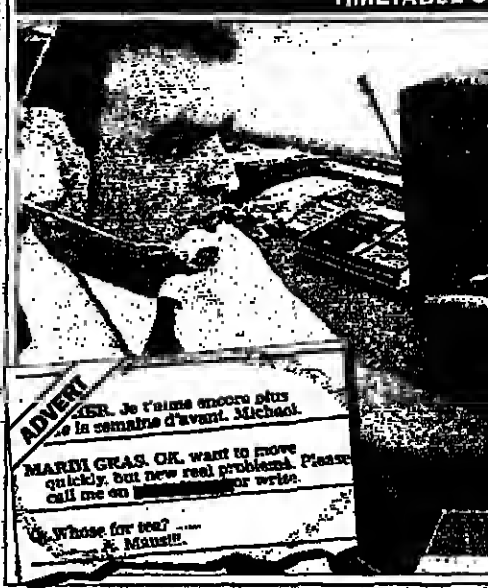
- 1995
- 9) May 18: Private address in Cambridge
 - 10) June 9: Pub in Chiswick, West London
 - 11) June 1: Camera shop in Dymchurch, Kent
 - 12) June 20: Demand to Barclays Bank, Northampton
 - 13) July 5: Barclays Bank, Berkhamsstead, Herts
 - 14) July 14: Private address, in Arnhem, Herts
 - 15) July 15: Private address, Richmond, southwest London
 - 16) Aug 19: Private address, in Ealing, southwest London
 - 17) Sept 12: Office in Whitton, West London
 - 18) Sept 12: Another office, Whitton
 - 19) Sept 27: Office in Woodstock, southeast London
 - 20) Oct 2: Pharmacy, Chiswick, West London
 - 21) Oct 24: Telephone box, Heston
 - 22) Nov 23: Telephone box, Ealing, southwest London
 - 23) Dec 11: Private address in Southall, West London
 - 24) Dec 28: Telephone box in Acton, West London

- 1996
- 25) Jan 30: Barclays Bank in Ealing, West London
 - 26) Feb 5: Outside Barclays Bank in Ealing, London
 - 27) Apr 20: Outside Barclays Bank in Ealing

- 1997
- 28) Nov 15: Sainsbury's in Ealing
 - 29) Nov 15: Sainsbury's in Ealing
 - 30) Nov 25: Sainsbury's in Ealing
 - 31) Nov 25: Sainsbury's in Ealing
 - 32) Nov 25: Sainsbury's in Ealing
 - 33) Dec 6: Sainsbury's in Ealing

- 1998
- 34) Jan 16: Sainsbury's, Chiswick, West London
 - 35) Feb 15: Underage Police, West London
 - 36) Feb 15: Cash machine, Forest Hill, picked up by customer later explodes
 - 37) Mar 4: Forest Hill, southwest London
 - 38) Mar 17: Ealing High Street

TIMETABLE OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE ARREST



DECEMBER 1994: Six devices sent to branches of Barclays bank in London without warning. Two ignited. First demand letter sent to Barclaycard head office with heading "Welcome to the Mardi Gra Experience"

AUGUST - DECEMBER 1995: Nine devices delivered by hand to various locations and businesses around London

APRIL 1996: Demand letter sent to a national newspaper and device explodes next to Barclays Bank in The Broadway, Ealing. Three people slightly injured

NOVEMBER 1997: Five suspect packages discovered in vicinity of Sainsbury's stores. Three explode. Slight injury

DECEMBER 1997: Police begin to communicate with bomber through personal column of daily newspaper (left)

FEBRUARY 5th 1998: Potentially lethal device containing improvised single-barrel shotgun with mechanical timer in Sainsbury's carrier bag explodes at a bus stop in West Ealing

MARCH 1998: Police begin to fine tune their plan to catch bomber through cash machines linked to Scotland Yard

APRIL 1998: Withdrawals made by bomber and police rush to scene of transaction. Stop car containing Pearce brothers and find money, cards and disguises

Whitton, near Twickenham, an area targeted twice by the bomber in 1995.

Officers seconded from National Crime Squad surveillance teams moved in and halted a car pulling away. Inside were the Pearce brothers, wearing false beards, dark glasses and hats. Ronald was

also wearing a wig. The brothers were carrying £700 they had just withdrawn: Edgar Pearce had ten of the Sainsbury's cards.

Inside his home in Chiswick, police found his bomb factory and a loaded revolver with a silencer. Two bombs were primed and ready to be

used: police believe he was planning to move on to a more sophisticated bombing phase.

Officers also found a crossbow inside a holed Sainsbury's bag. The trigger was hooked up to a length of fishing line. With it Pearce could have fired the bolt unobserved into a crowd. There were

lengths of copper piping for bomb-making, 272 12-gauge shotgun cartridges and a further quantity of 410 cartridges to be used in a specially adapted revolver.

After the Mardi Gra bomber's capture, Mr Grieve said: "He had a really good plan, but we had a better one."



At the moment of his arrest in southwest London, police lift the Mardi Gra bomber's wig before he is led away

Pensioner who picked up bomb in bag 'died of shock'

THE Mardi Gra campaign of extortion terrorised and injured six people. A pensioner who mistakenly picked up a Sainsbury's bag containing one of the devices was so shocked, even though it did not go off, that her family claim it eventually killed her. Curtis Dennis, a promising athlete, was injured in his thigh and despite successful surgery has been unable to resume his athletic career.

Relatives of Mrs Joan Kane, 74, a widow, said that she was haunted by the thought that she had carried the explosive device on two buses on her way home.

She would sit all day alone in her lounge, staring at the television, even though it was switched off, according to her daughter. Mr March said that her mother suffered flashbacks, sunk into a decline and finally died.

Mrs Kane had carried the bag home to Hanwell, West London, from a trip to her local Sainsbury's in December 1997. It is thought she picked up the bag when she was gathering up her shopping. She only realised what she had when she was unpacking. Her next-door neighbour came in, recognised the device, and called police. Mrs March, 51, said: "It was just sheer shock. She never ever came to terms with it. She tried to go back to West Ealing a couple of times and had to be brought back. She had always bailed through

THE VICTIMS

previous health troubles — always. But on that day, her fighting spirit was taken away." Less than three months after taking the bomb home Mrs Kane died of a virulent form of leukaemia. "The general opinion is that it triggered the illness," said Mrs March, a plant manager at a garden centre.

Less than half of the devices that were dumped, posted or delivered failed to go off. On one occasion an explosive device was planted at a busy bus stop where people were walking by. It went off when the immediate area was unusually clear of people.

Dr Chris Side almost lost an eye to a piece of shrapnel when he opened an explosive device at his home in Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, in July 1995.

The worst injury was suffered by Curtis Dennis when a device exploded near a Sainsbury's in Forest Hill, southeast London. His thigh was punctured by shrapnel and the wounds required surgery and skin grafts. Although he was left with no permanent injury he has not resumed his athletic career.

In April 1996, a double-barrelled shotgun device hidden in flower beds outside a bank in Ealing, West London, exploded hitting Tang Di, a customer: with pellets. He was not seriously hurt.



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Twisted mind of invisible man

THE BOMBER

Reports by Stewart Tendler,
Richard Duce and
Adam Fresco

AS THE Mardi Gra bomber spread fear and alarm across London during his three-year terror campaign, detectives were advised to look for a single man or woman, no more than 40 years old, who could even be a renegade police officer.

Sitting in his West London terraced house with its neatly tended garden, 61-year-old unemployed Edgar Eugene Pearce probably allowed himself a smug smile of satisfaction as he realised police were no nearer to ending his home-made bombing exploits.

The son of a former East End tailor far from fitted the criminal profile offered by experts but with the benefit of hindsight there were alarming signs of a twisted mind at work.

The few people who knew Pearce regarded him as an obsessive perfectionist who had slipped into eccentric behaviour which included getting up at dawn every day to cook himself a roast meal for breakfast. At his three-storey council house in a Chiswick cul-de-sac Pearce had a well equipped work-

shop where he would while away the time by working on clocks and electronic gadgetry. It was here that he was eventually to piece together the simple bombs he made from a video box, spring and shotgun cartridge.

Edgar Pearce and his brother Ronald, 67, grew up in the East End of London where they went to local schools. Edgar decided on a career in advertising and, after attending college, worked for several London firms before moving to South Africa in 1971.

He stayed there for the next five years and, along the way, acquired a working knowledge of firearms. By the time he returned to Britain he had married his wife Maureen and the pair set up a restaurant busi-

ness in Hayling Island, near Portsmouth, known as Jeanne's Cuisine.

The business seems to have been a success although Pearce's wife fell ill around the time of dealings with Barclays Bank which left him with his grudge against the bank.

When Pearce was deciding on his first target for an extortion plan it was Barclays that came to mind.

The couple sold up in 1982 and moved to Chiswick with their daughter Nicola before they eventually separated in 1987, although they remained on close terms.

Pearce would carry out DIY work on his former wife's home in Eltham, South-East London.

Pearce replaced his family by taking in lodgers at the house and neighbours remember him as an elusive outsider. He was distinctly unpopular with the local children, threatening them and telling them that he would poison their dogs, when he saw them playing in the street close to his front garden and his precious plants.

There was a closed-circuit camera over the front door — he told children playing nearby it was to ensure that they did not go near his flowerbeds.

He spent most of his time with his brother Ronald, a former Savile Row tailor, who lived less than a mile away in West London.

They drank at the Crown and Anchor public house on Chiswick High Road, only a few doors from the home Ronald Pearce shared with partner Sonia Bickham.

In June 1995, after being barred from the pub, apparently for rowdy behaviour, Edgar Pearce sent one of his devices to Andy Bennett, the landlord — he was the eighth target, Mr Bennett said later. "I thought someone had a vendetta



Edgar Pearce: an obsessive perfectionist who had slipped into eccentric behaviour

against me but I racked my brains and couldn't think why."

Pearce was known to be intelligent and knowledgeable about current affairs, but his neighbour Brenda Williams said that he would ignore everyone else in the street. "He

was weird. He wouldn't speak to anyone at all." Other neighbours thought of him as the "invisible man" because he was so rarely seen in the street.

At night, Pearce, who was a heavy drinker, would sit by the side of his garden pond

reading until the small hours. Professor David Canter, director of the centre of investigative psychology at Liverpool University, said that Edgar Pearce was on a "search for some sort of feelings of achievement and self-worth rather than escape".



Ronald Pearce tries to shield his face after being freed at the Old Bailey yesterday

Girlfriend consoles ex-Savile Row tailor

THE brother of the Mardi Gra bomber was "drawn into something he knew nothing about", his girlfriend said as he was freed from prison.

Ronald Pearce, a former Savile Row tailor, was sentenced to a year in jail for possessing the stun gun that was found when he was arrested with his brother Edgar as he withdrew money from cash machines. He was freed yesterday because of the time he has spent in jail awaiting trial.

Ronald Pearce, bespectacled and wearing a grey sweat-shirt, celebrated his freedom with Sonia Bickham at a restaurant in Chiswick, West London, with a cup of hot chocolate and a salad.

The couple sat holding hands as they chatted, catching up on lost time. Miss Bickham, who has known Ronald

THE BROTHER

for 35 years, denied that the brothers were as close as was believed. The shop assistant, who has stood by her man throughout, said: "They have not really been close at all. They have never been close, but they are brothers."

"Ronald was drawn into something he knew nothing about," Miss Bickham added that she was "clashed" by the news that her boyfriend had walked free from court. "Nobody knew what was going to happen. I spoke to him last night and he said, 'Cross your fingers I'll be home.'"

"His solicitor phoned me this morning with the good news. The last year has been a living nightmare but I always thought it would come to a

good end." Miss Bickham said that they would be celebrating his release in private, and that they had no plans to marry. "He wants to get back to reality. He'll get through this. I don't know if he'll forgive it. He does feel bitter."

She described Ronald as "artistic in every way", adding: "He's a master of whatever he does."

A few hours earlier Ronald Pearce had listened intently in court as the Recorder of London told him: "You have not offered any explanation for your possession of this weapon. But the prosecution cannot say that you intended to use it in any way in the campaign conducted by your brother."

Pearce left court yesterday afternoon refusing to speak to waiting reporters.

Daytime television gave inspiration for blackmail and bombs

A DAYTIME television repeat captured the imagination of Edgar Pearce. The programme focused on Rodney Witchole, a former detective who tried to extort almost £4 million from firms after he contaminated baby food.

Witchole was jailed for 17 years. Pearce, who was with time on his hands after a car accident which he says rendered him incapable of working, was riveted by the programme and believed he could go one better and evade capture. His first job was to establish a target and he hit on Barclays Bank, remembering a ten-year-old disagreement which he blamed for his wife falling ill when they ran a business together.

Then came the technological know-how on bomb building, which he pieced together from a television programme depicting spring-loaded cartridge devices. Over three years, the devices became more and more sophisticated as he grew in confidence.

Aware of the dangers of buying suspicious components close to home, he toured car boot sales. During trips to

THE PLOT

France, he stocked up on shotgun cartridges which he brought back in cases of wine.

He always wore gloves when carrying a bomb to its intended site and always wore the same jacket, which he never wore at home. When he made Sainsbury's his target, Pearce often placed devices inside the store's branded bags, cutting out serial numbers which linked bags to stores.

Pearce spoke French and decided to call himself the Mardi Gra bomber with his campaign starting on a Tuesday. He deliberately left the "S" from the end so that police would know that the bombs were his work. His first six bombs were sent to branches of Barclays which had been picked at random from Yellow Pages. He labelled them with a cutting from a home-entertainment magazine which read: "Welcome to the Mardi Gra Experience."

Pearce switched from targeting Barclays when the bank's chairman expressed concern about the bomber and Pearce

believed that he would use the attacks as an excuse to close branches. He targeted Sainsbury's because he thought that it might be vulnerable to extortion as it fell behind Tesco in the supermarket war.

He sent secretly snatched pictures of Sainsbury's shoppers to the Daily Mail, hoping to generate publicity for his cause and to pressure the supermarket to pay up. When the newspaper did not publish the photographs, he decided to use more dangerous devices to get publicity. Hearing that the IRA was using gas cylinders to achieve bigger explosions, he incorporated a wide range of devices in his campaign. These included a timed device which would fire shrapnel or cartridges from a length of tubing in a black bin liner.

It was only when he was caught on a police video camera in March 1998 in Eltham that officers knew for certain that they were hunting for a man. Black and white pictures showed him walk across the road, dump a black sack containing a shotgun device and walk off without looking round once.

A DEGREE IN TERROR

EDGAR PEARCE had studied and learnt from the crimes of Theodore Kaczynski, the American known as the Unabomber. Pearce shared the American terrorist's careful preparation and planning, his ability to avoid detection for long periods, and an obsessive joy in outwitting his pursuers.

Kaczynski, who was a professor at the University of California at Berkeley in the 1960s, eluded American investigators for 18 years while carrying out a string of terrorist attacks. By the time he was jailed for life in May last year, he had killed three people and injured 28 with home-made bombs containing razor blades and nails.

His motives were never clear. Kaczynski had sent newspapers a rambling 62-page manuscript in which he demanded a return to "wild nature" and railed against technology, the US Government, and major corporations, and was fêted in some quarters as a radical environmentalist.

Kaczynski, then 55, was last year sentenced to three life terms for his terrorist crimes, and to another 30 years for killing three men and maiming two others.

More for your money at Sainsbury's.



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Lethal devices made in garden

THE ARSENAL

By ADAM FRESCO
AND RICHARD DUCE

THE potentially lethal bombs designed by Edgar Pearce in the garden workshop of his council house home became increasingly sophisticated as his terror campaign developed.

His first simple but effective device was built around an empty video box. Inside there was a shotgun bridge and a simple doorbolt which acted as the firing mechanism. When the box was opened, a spring-loaded device shot the bolt into the 12 bore cartridge. One of the more elaborate devices in-



A gun and bullets recovered from Pearce's home

involved a butane gas cylinder connected to an electric circuit, timer and gas lighter which was then placed inside a plastic bin liner. It was planted on February 1996 out-

side Barclays bank in Eltham High Street and Pearce partially opened the gas valve, allowing the plastic bag to inflate. The timer set off the lighter which he had planned

to ignite the escaping gas. Police believe the device, which was spotted in time by a refuse collector, would have created a lethal fireball.

Another device adopted by Pearce was a "shotgun bomb" which involved placing a length of copper piping on a concrete base which, with the use of a timing device, would fire a cartridge. Other adaptations of the shotgun bomb involved the tubing being packed with panel pins or ball bearings.

Pearce had converted his greenhouse into a workshop for his bombmaking activities. When police finally raided the property they found six gas cylinders and a dozen 12 volt batteries, further devices and two crossbows.

BALKANS WAR: AIR CAMPAIGN

Airborne cameras stalk death columns

Bombers queue in the air ready to act on instant information from sophisticated surveillance, reports

Michael Evans, Defence Editor

YUGOSLAV troops and paramilitaries engaged in "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo are being monitored by an array of Western surveillance technology in the sky.

When they dare to venture into the open, it is just a question of time before Nato bombers arrive armed with anti-personnel cluster bombs or anti-tank projectiles to attack. President Milosevic's men are facing a period of high risk.

At this stage in the air campaign, Nato's advanced technology should change the odds. Yugoslav forces must act discreetly to hide from the airborne cameras and reconnaissance systems — the easiest way to outsmart the smartest of high-tech equipment.

The organisation has in place a network of surveillance systems linked to ground stations or to airborne command aircraft which can provide immediate information to waiting bombers about the location of Yugoslav armoured columns on the move.

With the emphasis turning increasingly to attacks on ground forces, the urgent need is for instant-response aircraft missions. If bombers wait for information to be data-linked back to ground stations, then analysed, it could still be two hours before they are over targets. This is why, according to Paul Beaver of Jane's Information Group, Nato is expected to operate a "cab rank" approach, with aircraft queuing in air space, ready to react the moment armoured columns

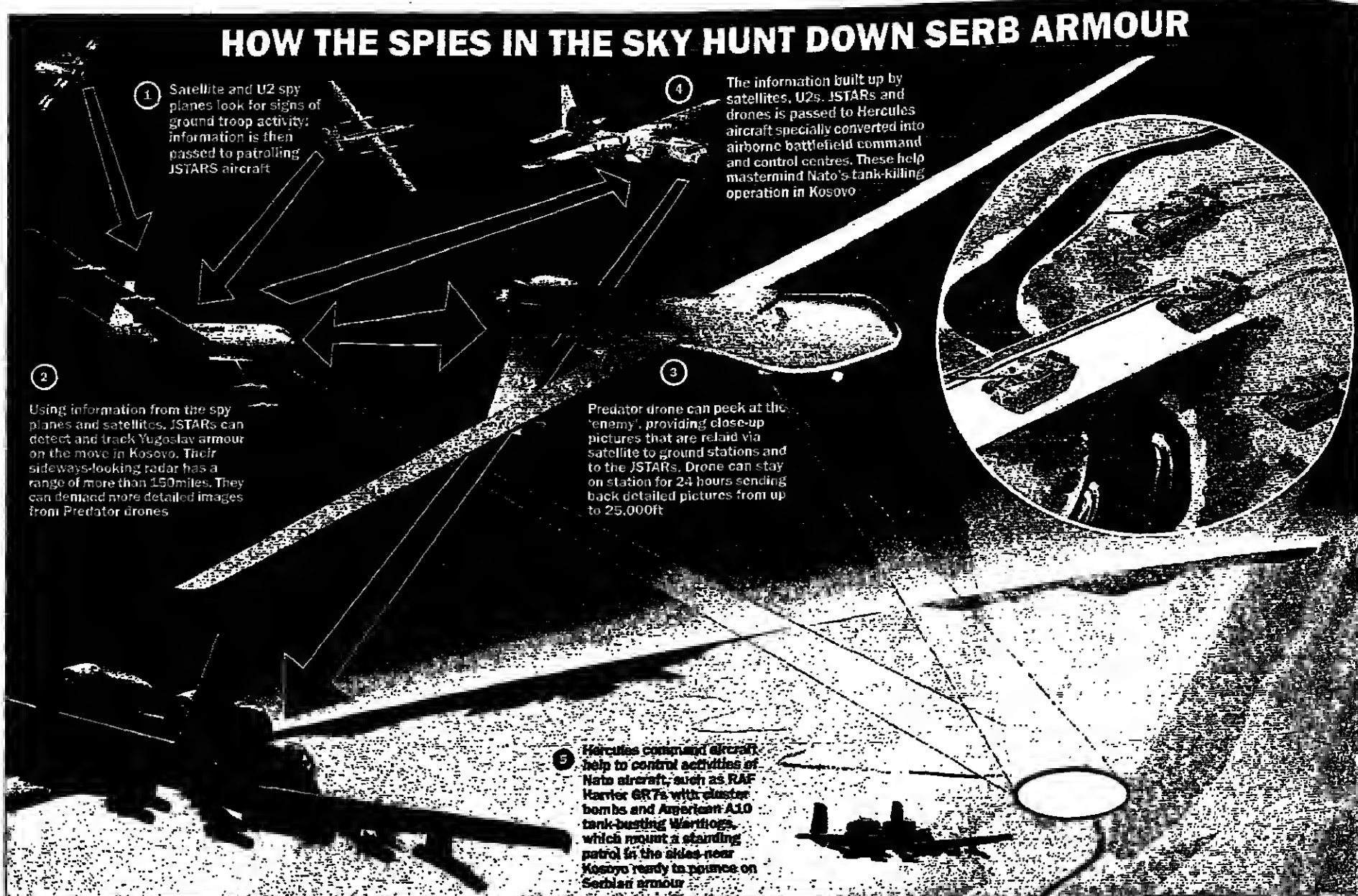
make an appearance — a strategy used in the Gulf War.

To facilitate the instant response, the Americans have "airborne battlefield and control centre" Hercules aircraft, called EC130E (ABCCC), which have extensive communications antennae. Just as the Avics provide air-battle management for all Nato aircraft operating over Yugoslavia, the modified Hercules supervise tank-killing operations.

Two US airborne surveillance systems and a German unmanned air vehicle (drone), as well as a range of reconnaissance aircraft, are operating all hours to catch Yugoslav troops in the open. A principal watcher, locating, classifying and tracking ground targets in all weathers is the American Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, called JSTARS or Joint Stars, which was first used in the 1991 Gulf War. The joint US Army/US Air Force aircraft can look "sideways" into Kosovo from more than 150 miles away.

The Joint Stars is a modified Boeing 707 with a phased array radar antenna that can provide targeting and battle management data to operators in the aircraft and to ground stations. The radar can detect slow-moving vehicles and, helped by advanced signal processing, can tell the difference between wheeled and tracked vehicles.

When focusing on a smaller area of terrain, the radar image can be enhanced to provide a higher-resolution picture; and the Joint Stars'



1 Satellite and U2 spy planes look for signs of ground troop activity; information is then passed to patrolling JSTARS aircraft

2 Using information from the spy planes and satellites, JSTARS can detect and track Yugoslav armour on the move in Kosovo. Its wide-area radar has a range of more than 150 miles. They can detect more detailed images from Predator drones

3 Predator drone can peek at the 'enemy', providing close-up pictures that are relayed via satellite to ground stations and to the JSTARS. Drone can stay on station for 24 hours sending back detailed pictures from up to 25,000ft

4 Hercules command aircraft help to control activities of Nato aircraft, such as RAF Harrier GR7s with cluster bombs and American A10 tank-busting Warthogs, which mount a standing patrol in the skies near Kosovo ready to pounce on Serbian armour

advanced synthetic aperture radar produces a photographic map of selected geographic areas, pinpointing precise locations of non-moving targets

such as bridges, airports or parked vehicles.

The radar is reputed to be able to cover nearly 400,000 square miles of territory in a

single eight-hour sortie. The Joint Stars is aided by two unmanned drones that provide even more precise tactical intelligence. These systems are the

American Predator, used over Bosnia-Herzegovina since October 1995, and the German CL289.

The Predator, operating

from a maximum altitude of 25,000ft, can produce pictures so clear that it is as if the camera is perched a few feet above the target. The German system

consists of reusable drones that fly pre-programmed missions, sending back pictures. They return to ground by parachute.

'Human shields' limit Harriers' choice of targets

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS
IN GIOIA DEL COLLE

RAF Harrier jet pilots resumed hazardous daylight raids on Kosovo yesterday but were being impeded by Serb military commanders using ethnic Albanian villagers as human shields, the RAF said. "Cluster-bomb units have been dropped today but

there were fewer targets available than before," said Group Captain Ian Travers Smith, an RAF spokesman at the Gioia del Colle base in south-eastern Italy.

Asked what the problems facing the flyers were, he said: "There have been targets identified that were deemed unattainable."

Group Captain Travers Smith said

that it was up to the pilots to make a final judgment over whether their bombs might cause unacceptable collateral damage or civilian casualties. "They have the pickle button," he said. "They are directed toward a target, if in their opinion the target is attackable it is their final decision."

Questioned whether Serb military convoys threatened by the Harriers

had been moving into inhabited villages to avoid being bombed this week, Group Captain Travers Smith said: "Well what would you do? If somebody called you on a mobile phone and said that there were planes approaching you from 20 miles away, wouldn't you go and hide in a village?"

The latest daylight attacks by the

Harriers were mounted just hours after a night raid launched on ammunition stores where the RAF acknowledged it achieved only "limited success" because of heavy anti-aircraft fire. The raid was also hampered by smoke and haze and a possible technical problem in one aircraft, but all the pilots brought their GR7 fighter-bombers back safely.



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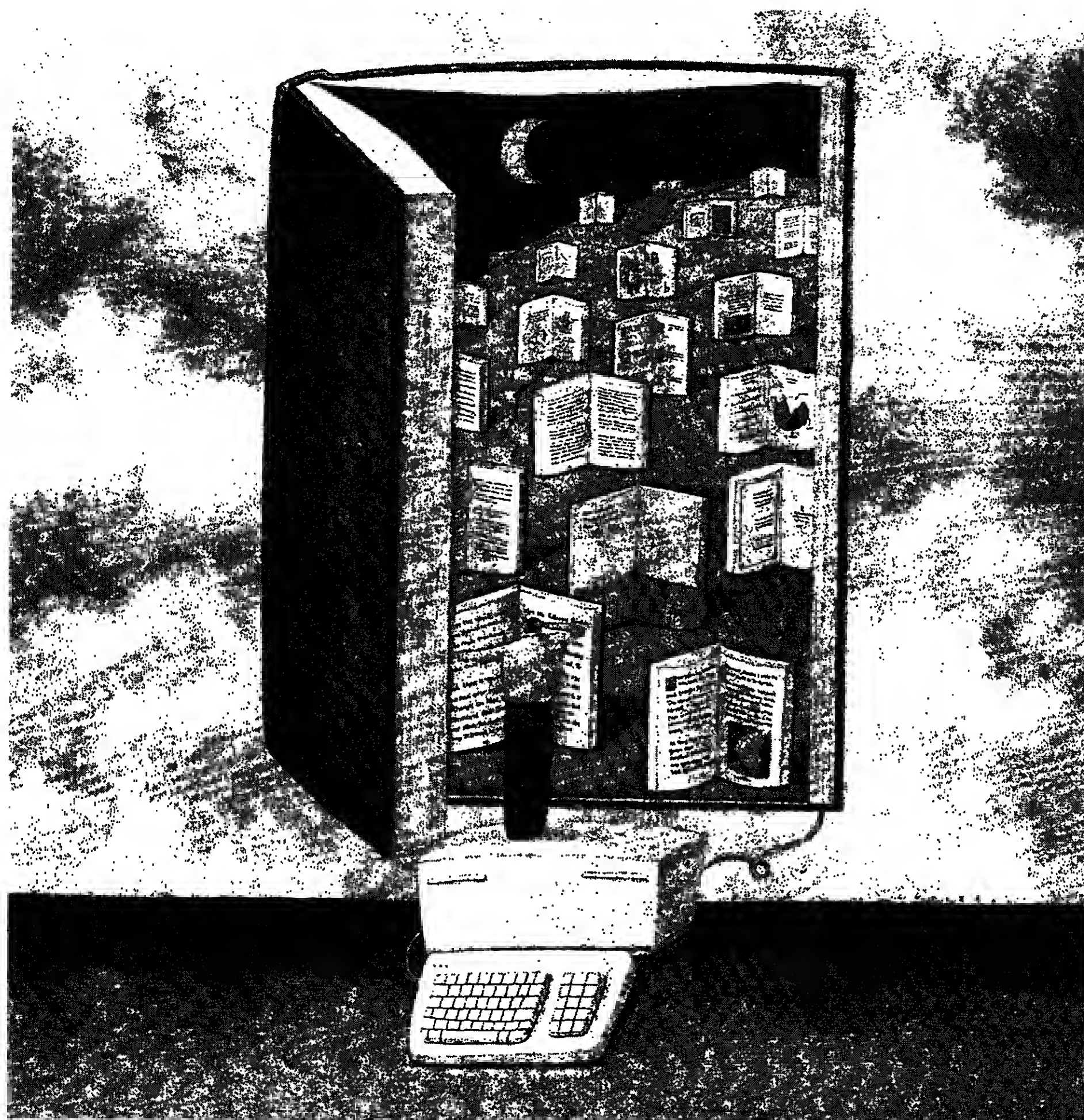
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BALKANS WAR: POLICY DOUBTS

Albright made US scapegoat



The Secretary of State is being accused of misreading Milosevic, Ben Macintyre reports from Washington

Madeleine Albright, the hawkish US Secretary of State, has come under heavy fire in America for misreading President Milosevic and plunging America into a war in the Balkans without a clear idea of how to get out.

As the NATO bombardment continues, the US media has turned on Ms Albright as the principal American architect of that policy, accusing her of following an agenda based more on wishful thinking and personal inclination than diplomatic and military realities.

The wave of recrimination has raised the issue of whether Ms Albright can long retain her office if Mr Milosevic cannot be removed from his.

"Albright misjudged Milosevic on Kosovo," declared an untypically stark headline in *The Washington Post* yesterday, in which the Secretary of State was accused of basing US policy on the mistaken belief that the Serb leader would back down either before, or very soon after, NATO resorted to force.

"These miscalculations about the efficacy of the threat... have led the United States and its allies into an air war in Europe that has produced some of the same negative consequences they said they were trying to head off," the newspaper stated.

Forced on to the defensive, the combative Ms Albright has refused to acknowledge that US policymakers have been wrong-footed by the level of Serbian defiance or the scale of "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo. Indeed, she has declined to discuss the steps that led to the bombardment.

"We will have plenty of time to go back and look at what we did or did not do... I am completely focused on what we are doing now," she said on Tuesday.

Ms Albright's critics say she played the leading role in rejecting the warnings of senior intelligence and military advisers and persuading President Clinton of the need to use force.

She was also the most vigorous proponent of the view that air power alone would suffice, predicting that Mr Milosevic, "a playground bully," would back off after one sharp punch on the nose, despite evidence to the contrary shown by another "bully" in Iraq.

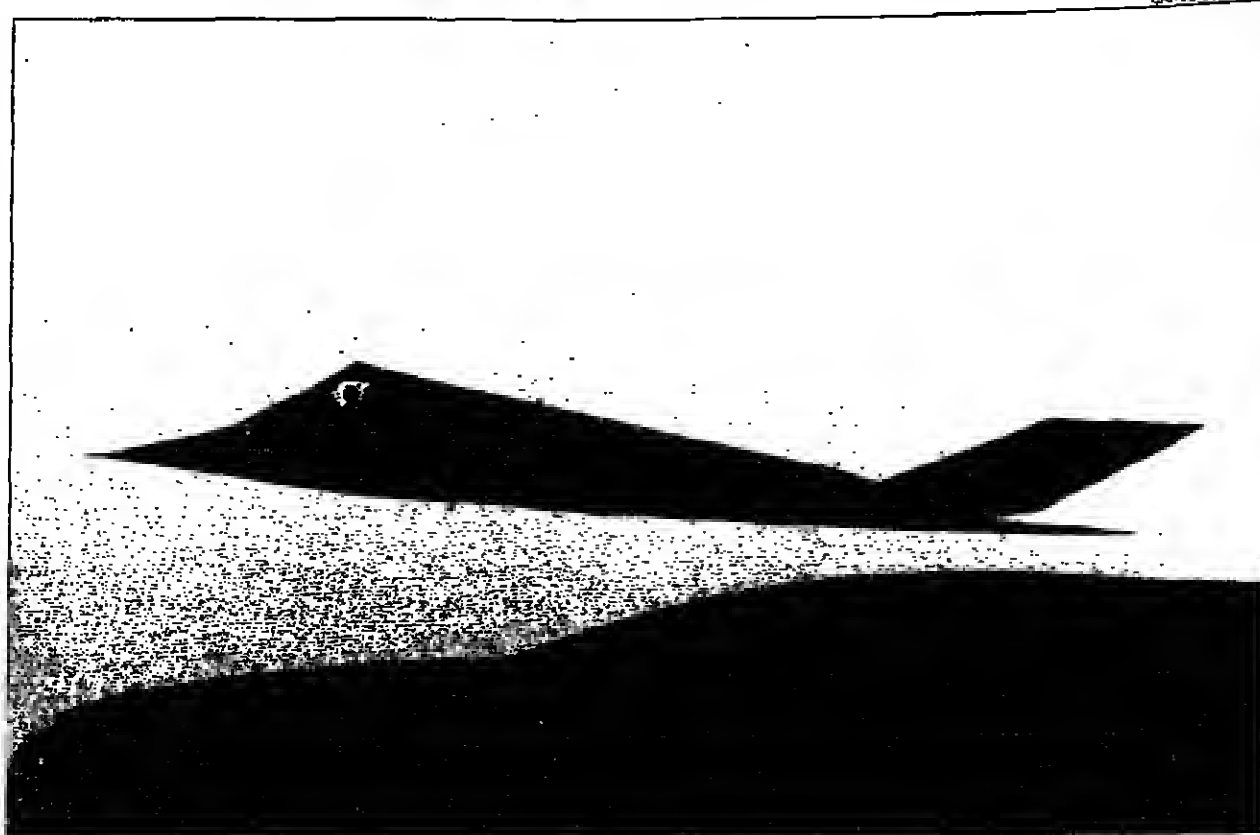
That Mr Milosevic might hunker down through the air attacks while accelerating his onslaught in Kosovo was considered by Ms Albright and her advisers to be the least likely of scenarios.

One official has described the Yugoslav conflict as "Albright's war", and critics have argued that her enthusiasm for military action against Serbia is a reflection not only of her own history, as a wartime refugee from Czechoslovakia, but also of her personal ambition.

Desperate for a foreign policy success to compare with that of Richard Holbrooke, with whom she has often jostled over US policy in the Balkans, Ms Albright intended the peace talks at Rambouillet in France to be her own version of the Dayton accords and the apogee of her diplomatic career.

"Everyone in Albright's circle is very conscious of how anxious she is to have a victory to call her own. Instead, she now has a calamity of her own," wrote the columnist Arianna Huffington.

If the costly air bombardment continues without a definite result or, worse, evolves into a protracted ground war, then US public opinion is certain to be rather more than mildly irritated and there may be no one, least of all Bill Clinton, who will step in to save Ms Albright.



An F117A Nighthawk Stealth fighter en route from its base in Oklahoma to join the campaign against Yugoslavia

Nato is on target in ideological battle

For old Nato hands like me, some of the newspaper articles in recent days by former serving officers, many of whom are old friends and former colleagues, have revealed a worrying lack of understanding about the alliance.

There is real debate to be had about Nato's long-term role and how Kosovo will affect that. But from a military point of view, the crisis in the Balkans has shown Nato in a more positive light than its critics would have us believe.

Too many of these critics appear stuck in a Cold War mindset, and a Cold War that has been conveniently reassessed to fit their arguments. They portray Nato simply as a military counterweight to Russia, but it was more than that.

The North Atlantic Treaty opens with a commitment to safeguard the "freedom, common heritage and civilisation" of the member states. Nato was an ideological organisation when it was established in



Since Milosevic has assumed Stalin's mantle, the alliance had to act against him, writes Sir Jeremy Mackenzie

1949 and it is an ideological organisation today. What has changed fundamentally is the context for this ideology. Nato was founded to protect Western Europe against the bullying and repression of Soviet communism which made life miserable for so many of our fellow Europeans for most of the second half of this century.

Russia has renounced totalitarianism and the methods of inflicting it on its people against which Nato protected us. But the Soviet Union's Stalinist mantle has been assumed by President Milosevic. He is inflicting on Kosovo precisely the pain and suffering that Nato was conceived to guard against.

The architects of Nato were determined that Stalin's totali-

tarianism should be resisted. Since Mr Milosevic has inherited Stalin's legacy, it is absolutely right that Nato should act against him. We should also be clear that Nato's operation is not simply the United States and Britain acting as Europe's policemen. This is a war on behalf of Europe, being waged by Europe.

Of course, in today's vastly different world, the strategy and tactics of the Cold War will no longer do. This is not a war for our national survival but a campaign to prevent a humanitarian disaster on our continent. The ends are different and so must be the means.

I have no doubt that the Nato air offensive will achieve its aim of degrading Mr Milosevic's ability to wage war on the people of Kosovo. But I also know that this too will take time. Quick fixes such as the Gulf War are the exception to the rule, and any professional critic who says otherwise is doing us all a disservice.

Sir Jeremy Mackenzie was Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe for Nato between 1994 and 1998

air defences. And the allies are doing so on the basis of political consensus. All Nato decisions are taken jointly by all allies. Nato is therefore dealing with Mr Milosevic in the same way that it has deterred Soviet aggression, as a truly multinational alliance.

The pictures we see on our television screens concentrate on the skill and bravery of RAF crews, and the significant contribution of the United States. This is entirely natural. But Kosovo is not a re-run of the Gulf War. Thirteen Nato allies are taking part in this operation: a Dutch F16 has shot down a Serbian MIG29 and German Tornados are playing key roles in suppressing Serb

How well was Blair briefed?

Did the men of Whitehall make Downing St fully aware of the risks involved in Nato's strategy? Sue Cameron asks



How strongly did Britain's top civil servants warn Tony Blair about the risks of his Balkan adventure? As it becomes clear that Nato has failed in its declared aim of protecting the Kosovan Albanians and the threat of a murderous ground war comes a little closer, civil service insiders are wondering if this war will go down as one of Whitehall's greatest failures.

"Did Whitehall bog it up?" asked one former top civil servant this week. "Or did the Prime Minister overrule civil servants when they laid out all the arguments against bombing Serbia? He has every right to do so, of course, but I am quite certain there will have been rumblings round the table of Committee Room C."

The large and elegant Committee Room C is in the Cabinet Office. It is where the permanent secretaries — the top civil servants in each government department — meet every Wednesday. It is chaired by the most senior mandarin of them all, Sir Richard Wilson, the Cabinet Secretary and confidant of Mr Blair. It is his success in forging a strong relationship with the Prime Minister that is raising eyebrows now.

Few in Whitehall doubt that Sir Richard will have put all the possibilities to Mr Blair. What some are wondering is whether he gave strong enough warnings about the worst-case scenarios. For rumblings at those top-level meetings in Committee Room C will all centre on the same things: how it was that the consequences of bombing were not thought through more thoroughly.

"Richard won't have wanted to jeopardise his relationship with Blair by going against a policy the Prime Minister wanted," said one man who has worked with

the top civil servant. "Sir Richard is very courageous and he has a brilliant mind — another former colleague said. 'But he is... well, a bit of a courtier.'"

Sir Richard will not have been the only mandarin intimately involved in advising ministers on the crisis. Sir John Kerr, head of the Foreign Office, will also have played a key role, as will Kevin Tebbitt, senior official at the Ministry of Defence.

Sir John has spent much of his career in Europe, but his last post before taking over at the Foreign Office was as Ambassador in Washington and he is an Atlanticist. A former permanent secretary believes he may have been worried about the recent glitches in Britain's relationship with the US.

Some on the diplomatic circuit fear that Mr Blair's willingness to fall in behind the US bodes ill for the future of the "special relationship". As one former ambassador remarked: "We could be in for a period of poodle-dom."

Missings among diplomats are as nothing compared with the concern inside the Ministry of Defence. The MoD must always be prepared for war. "It's what we keep them for and the military don't like to say no," one former permanent secretary said. However, the military has had its doubts from the start about the objectives of the Nato attack and whether Mr Milosevic could be bombed into submission.

In the Falklands conflict there was a clear, limited military objective — to oust the Argentine invaders, and only Britain and Argentina were involved. If Mr Blair hopes that this war will do for him what the Falklands did for Margaret Thatcher, he should think again.

Sue Cameron is a writer and broadcaster on Whitehall

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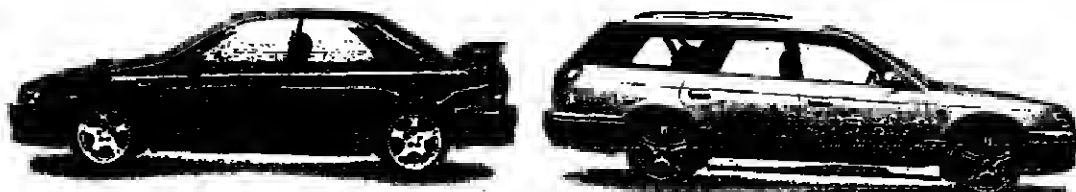
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Yugoslavia stamps its defiance

A cheap weapon in time of war

By Christine MIDDAP

POSTAGE stamps are a relatively cheap propaganda tool in times of war.

David Beech, the head of the philatelic collection at the British Library, said that while stamps were often issued to commemorate a victory, it was not uncommon for them to be used for propaganda purposes.

"Essentially, the more need for propaganda the more extreme the stamps. They are common when a country needs to demonstrate what is happening for propaganda purposes," he said.

An example of this was a series of stamps issued by Russia in 1940 called "Occupation of Eastern Poland". The stamps depicted Poles welcoming Soviet troops and waving to columns of tanks. Another scene showed soldiers distributing newspapers to the people.

Hitler's head appeared on stamps in Germany from the 1930s. These survived the end of the Second World War, when the Allied occupation forces continued to use the stamps with the offending face masked by stars.

More recently, Hanoi issued stamps during the Vietnam War depicting victorious Vietcong fighters on captured American tanks.

Belgrade mocks Nato with a postal flourish, Tom Walker in Belgrade writes

YUGOSLAVIA issued an anti-Nato stamp yesterday in a mark of protest at the allied airstrikes against its towns and cities.

The stamp depicts a bull's eye — the logo of Serb demonstrators. Beneath it is written "target", a capital "A" to denote the first in the series, and "Yugoslavia" in Cyrillic.

"We have had a huge number delivered and we are expecting more designs," said a cashier in Belgrade's main post office in Takovska Street last night. She said the stamps had no recent precedent, but philatelists in the city recalled the issue of a special series during the Second World War, when Belgrade was last bombed.

The stamp does not denote a denomination because of the plummeting value of the dinar. It can be used only domestically since all international mail deliveries have ceased. At yesterday's value, 50 stamps were selling for 102 dinars, or roughly £3.50.

The second issue in the series will feature an F117 Stealth bomber, the only US plane downed so far in the air war. The Stealth motif has already featured on a postcard from Budjanovi, where it came down. On the reverse side a message reads: "If undelivered, please return to the White House".

The bull's eye motif adorns T-shirts, baseball caps and badges. The more chic Belgraders also attach it to their pets as they take them for walks in the shopping district. As in the winter of 1996,

when tens of thousands demonstrated against the regime of President Milosevic, adversity seems to have brought out the city's creative best.

Television stations have shown an array of anti-Nato cartoons and sequences likening the Western alliance to Nazi Germany. BK television, run by Bogoljub Karic, the most powerful businessman in Serbia and a close friend of the Milosevics, has an especially creative graphics department. Yesterday the channel showed Nato aircraft flying in a swastika formation, followed by the simple caption: Dejo vu.



The first postage stamp in the anti-Nato series

The issue of the stamps came after a bleak day for the Yugoslav postal system: earlier, state television showed pictures from Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, where the main post office had apparently been destroyed by a rogue Nato missile.

The country's telephone system is just coping, although the small mobile network service in Kosovo has ground to a halt after Nato destroyed a vital transmitter. Landlines are coming under increasing strain, and connections to friendly countries like Greece, Russia and Ukraine tend to be better and easier. All links with Britain went down for 24 hours two days ago.

The bombing of bridges in the northern city of Novi Sad has also severed some communications networks, and there are fears that Yugoslavia's few Internet service providers might soon fold. With the postal system almost non-existent, bills cannot be posted.

The television network is similarly threatened, and the state-run Radio Television Serbia now relies on the frequencies of other stations in towns and cities to broadcast its message. In many rural areas, there is no longer any television service.

Sources in Radio Television Serbia say they fear that the station's headquarters in central Belgrade could be targeted by Nato missiles, although the building is located in a more built-up area than the Interior Ministry, which was destroyed by a twin batch of Tomahawks last weekend.



Yugoslavs protesting at Nato raids display the bull's eye logo, which they have adopted as their anti-war symbol

Nationalist demagogue thrives on catastrophe

NATO'S rejection of Yugoslavia's ceasefire offer in Kosovo is likely to fuel a vicious battle now under way in Belgrade, one which pits Serb against Serb.

For the alliance bombing is helping to bolster the power of a former paramilitary leader said to be mentally scarred after being tortured and allegedly raped by Muslim prisoners when he served a jail sentence in his native Sarajevo.

Vojislav Seselj, the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister who counts among his friends Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the Russian nationalist extremist, and Jean-Marie Le Pen, the French far-right leader, is determined to "cleanse" Serbia of the moderates and democrats he denounces as traitors and fifth columnists.

Masked men in the pay of Mr Seselj and his Radical Party are believed to be behind a campaign of beatings and intimidation aimed at ridding the country of human rights

Power struggle pits Serb against Serb, writes Eve-Ann Prentice

activists and champions of democracy. The victims include lawyers, journalists and intellectuals, many of whom have fled to Hungary.

Mr Seselj fosters a belief that the Nato bombings are largely the fault of moderates and his power base is spreading at the expense of politicians such as Vuk Draskovic, his counterpart in the federal Yugoslav Government. It was Mr Draskovic who on Tuesday announced the Kosovo ceasefire offer and even Downing Street recognises that his star is waning, saying that he has "zero power".

One aspect of Mr Seselj's campaign has been the closure of several leading independent Serbian newspapers and the respected B92 radio station. He is also believed to be behind the orders to instruct guards to keep foreign journalists out of the country by refusing to acknowledge visas issued by Mr Draskovic's ally, the Yugoslav Information Minister, Milan Kovic.

In the Byzantine world of Balkan politics, Mr Seselj has a complex relationship with President Milosevic and his wife, Mira Markovic.

Political analysts in Belgrade believe that the ex-paramilitary chief has been used by Mr Milosevic to garner support among the less well-educated. But now some fear that his frenzied anti-Western rhetoric may be sticking a chord with more moderate Serbs who are united against the Nato bombings.

Although Mr Seselj has in the past denounced Mrs Markovic, he and his party are closely allied to her United Yugoslav Left movement.

A skilful manipulator of his audiences, Mr Seselj employs the same tactics as Mr Zhirinovskiy, making promises of money to those who have been hardest hit by sanctions — the mass of Serbian workers and pensioners.

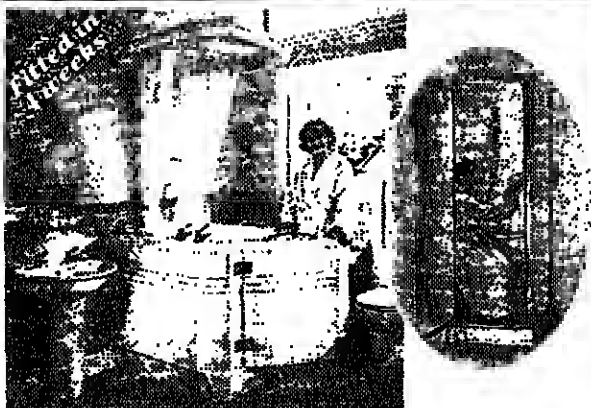
Born in Sarajevo in 1950, Mr Seselj was reported to be the brightest student of political science of his generation at Sarajevo University. However, he seems to have undergone a personality change after being jailed for 22 months in 1984, after the discovery of a "counter-revolutionary" document written by him. The manuscript, which was never published, advocated a multi-party system and the ending of republic status for Bosnia and Montenegro. Bosnia was too Muslim, he wrote in his treatise, while Montenegro was so full of Serbs that it should just be a natural part of Serbia. It was while serving his sentence that he was certainly tortured and allegedly raped by fellow prisoners. During the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, Mr Seselj led one of the two most feared paramilitary groups, the other being headed by Arkan.

Now Mr Milosevic faces a crucial choice — whether to throw in his lot with Mr Seselj, or to shore up the flagging support for Mr Draskovic. Clearly there is no longer room for both men in Serbia's corridors of power.



Seselj: experience in jail made him a hardliner

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Teenage girl dies in new danger sport

By ADRIAN LEE AND ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

A BRITISH schoolgirl has died in Australia while "canyoning", an adventure sport that involves swimming through fast-flowing river gorges.

Siobhan Halls, 17, drowned in the Blue Mountains area, about 50 miles west of Sydney, where she was on holiday. She is believed to have hit her head on a rock. Her father, Richard, said yesterday that she was not wearing a safety helmet.

The relatively new activity has claimed several lives. It is recognised as one of the most dangerous of the "white-knuckle" activities, which include bungee jumping and white-water rafting. Canyoning involves following the path of a river by swimming, scrambling over rocks and abseiling down waterfalls.

Mr Halls, who runs a stables, said his daughter was a

keen horse rider who was aware of the dangers of head injuries. "She would never ride without a helmet - that is what surprises me."

Miss Halls, from Steppingley in Bedfordshire, was with two male friends when the accident happened in the Mount Wilson area, near the town of Katoomba, where a network of creeks have cut deep, narrow gorges into the rock.

Her companions, both Australians, told police that they were swept away during the expedition along the Wollangambe River on Monday. They managed to drag themselves out of the swirling water but became separated from the schoolgirl.

Because the rugged mountain area is so remote, it took them five hours to raise the alarm. Miss Halls' body was recovered next day by New

South Wales police. It was wedged underwater by rocks.

Officers said yesterday that heavy rain had transformed the river into a fast-flowing flood, making conditions more risky than usual.

Mr Halls said his daughter, a lower sixth form pupil at Redborne Upper School in Amptill, Bedfordshire, was not a strong swimmer but was taking lessons.

Apart from a sailing course, she had not taken part in adventure activities before. A member of the Pony Club, she had ridden for Bedfordshire and had five horses.

She had travelled to Sydney with her mother, Jean, for a five-week holiday and was staying with an aunt. The two young men involved were friends of the family.

Bryant's Eye, page 49



Siobhan Halls, a keen horse rider, was said by her father not to be a strong swimmer

Canyons give thrill-seekers ultimate high

By ADRIAN LEE

CANYONING evolved from potholing and abseiling as lovers of "extreme sports" continued their search for the ultimate outdoor thrill.

It is believed that the sport, which is sometimes known as "canyoneering", was invented by potholers looking for undiscovered caves in France or New Zealand. A combination of walking, swimming, jumping and climbing, it attracts only the most daring adventurers.

Activity and outdoor centres across the world include it in their programmes, alongside established "white-knuckle" pursuits, such as white-water rafting. In Scotland, one company asks would-be canyoneers to sign disclaimers stating that they feel confident with their heads under water in confined spaces. A session costs £32.

Hard-core enthusiasts take to rivers at night, sometimes throwing themselves 100ft into deep pools. Although Miss Halls was not wearing a hel-

met, most centres insist on one, as well as elbow pads, ropes, a wetsuit and buoyancy aids. Instructors with mountaineering qualifications are always present.

The sport has claimed at least one other British life. In 1996, a 43-year-old Ayrshire man died when he was sucked into a whirlpool while canyoning in the French Alps.

"Of course all these sports have an element of risk," said a spokeswoman for one British company. "Canyoning is about pushing yourself to the extreme."

In the Blue Mountains, a vast area of creeks and rivers, at least four companies offer one-day canyoning expeditions, and injuries are not uncommon. A worker at one adventure company in Katoomba said: "Canyoning is more dangerous than abseiling or climbing. You are often walking on slippery rocks and can fall. But if you go with a reputable company, the accident rate is low."

Twin drowned after coastguard dinghy warning

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A GIRL who drowned when her inflatable toy dinghy was swept out to sea died only hours after a warning by coastguards of the danger.

Hayley Butler, 12, is believed to have jumped out when the dinghy was about 10 metres from the shore in an attempt to swim to safety against the tide.

Her twin sister Hannah, and a cousin, also 12, got back to the beach at the small Lincolnshire resort of Huttoft, near Mablethorpe. But, as her parents watched helplessly, Hayley sank within five minutes while clutching a plastic piddle.

After an incident involving two people in a dinghy the day before, coastguards had given warnings on local radio and in regional newspapers that inflatable dinghies were so flimsy and unstable to be taken into the sea.

The dead girl's mother, Trisha, 44, said: "Hayley was just a jolly kid. She was very good to the elderly neighbours near us. She was a very popular member of her class at school. We were just having a family afternoon on the beach with the kids when this happened."

The girl, whose father died



Hayley Butler: her twin sister made it ashore

several years ago, had lived with her mother, stepfather, twin sister and brother Dean, 15, in Mablethorpe since moving from Derby eight years ago.

By last night her body had still not been found but the dinghy was recovered 90 minutes after the incident, four miles off shore.

John Harrison, the Lincolnshire sector manager for HM Coastguard, said: "It's foolhardy using an inflatable dinghy at sea. During the summer we go along the beaches pleading with people not to go out in inflatables but they ignore us and some of them end up dead."

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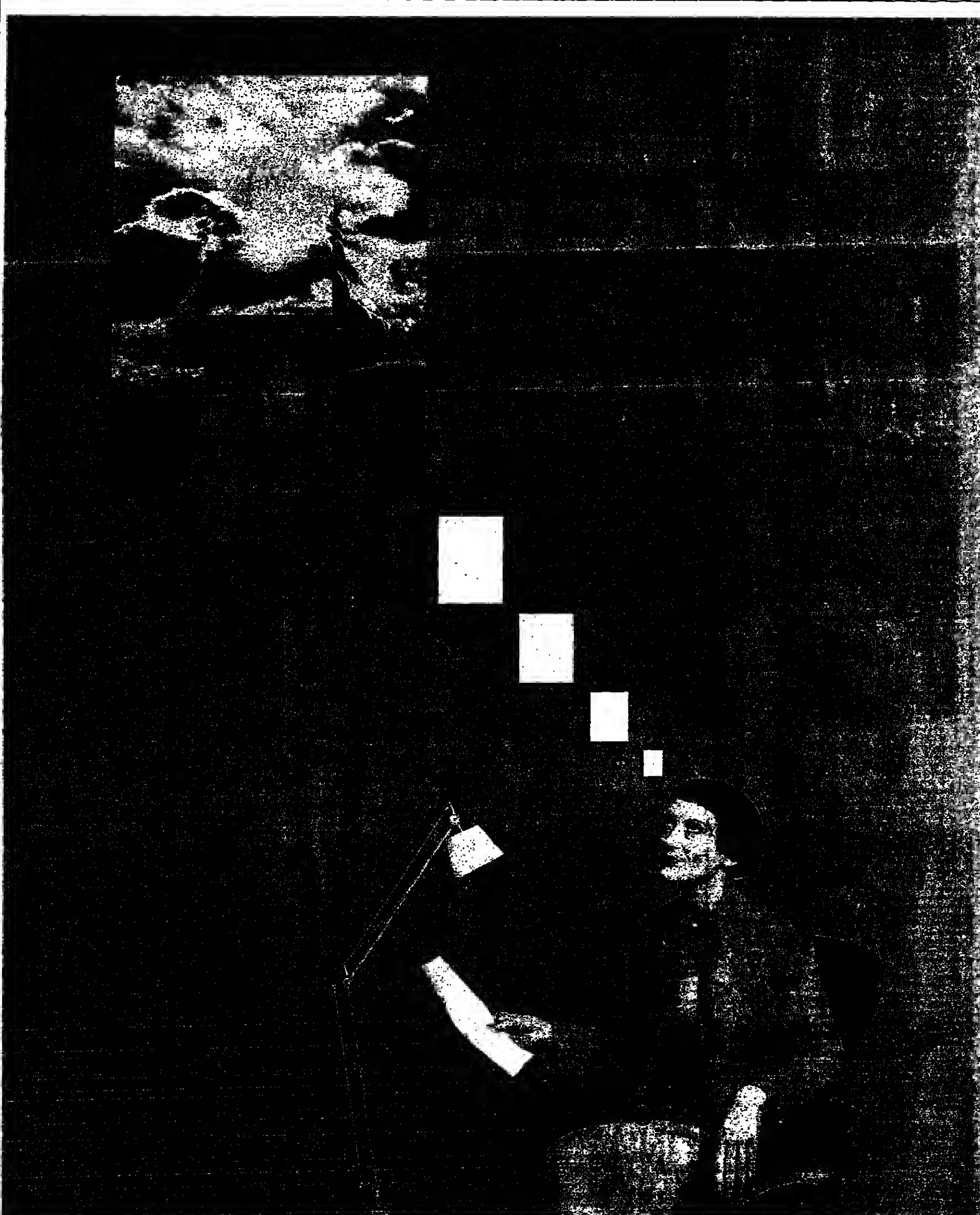
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Mobile phones 'quicken the brain'

OFFICIAL: MOBILE PHONES SCRAMBLE YOUR BRAINS

Radiation zaps your nervous system says new Government study

Critics have blamed mobile phones for stress and cancer

Scientists allay memory loss fears but want more research on brain 'hot spot', reports Nigel Hawkes

MOBILE telephones do not damage memory, although they do have one unexpected effect: quicker reaction times.

This could be caused by localised heating in one part of the brain and needs further investigation, according to a study ordered by the Government in response to fears about the safety of mobile phones.

If the heating is caused by microwave emissions, the study team at Bristol University said, it could have long-term health effects. This is because the body produces heat-shock proteins as a normal response to heating, and the long-term effect of such proteins in the brain is not known.

Contrary to earlier press reports, the study, published in the *International Journal of Radiation Biology*, found no effect on short-term memory in 36 volunteers subjected to half-hour bursts of microwave radiation mimicking mobile telephones.

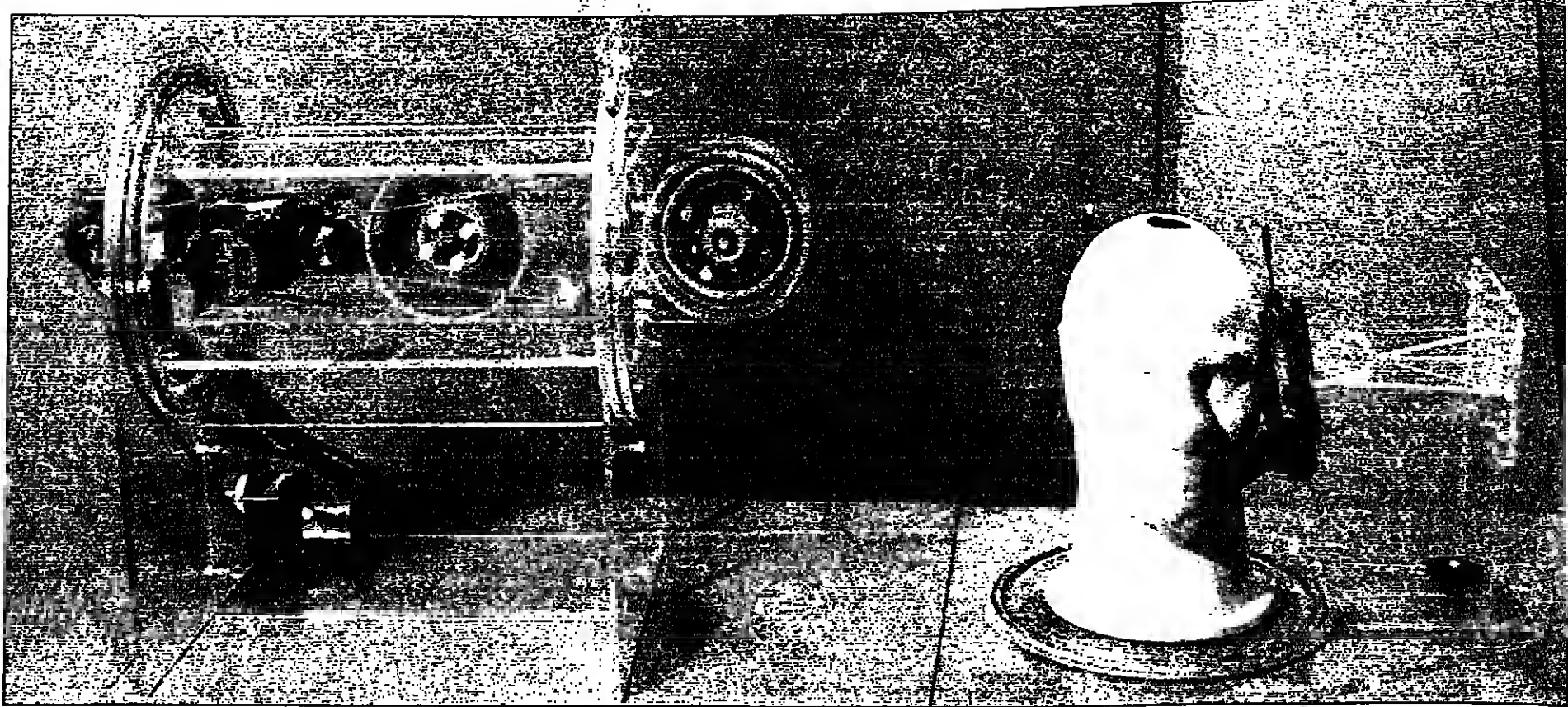
The volunteers had devices simulating the microwave out-

put of mobile telephones clamped on their left ears, placing them close to the areas of the brain that control language. They were shown words and pictures on a computer screen and tested for how well they recalled them.

The results show that recall was not affected by whether or not the device was turned on. Nor were any changes found in tests for spatial awareness or attention.

The experiments did show a small improvement in reaction times. The words "yes" and "no" were flashed on to the screen and the volunteers had to react by pressing a matching button. When the headset was switched on and mimicking an analogue telephone, reaction times improved by 4 per cent.

Although this change is small, it occurred in two groups of volunteers and is unlikely to be a chance finding. A similar trend was observed with digital signals but was not statistically significant.



A plastic head is used to show the effect of a mobile telephone on human brain tissue. The government-backed study found localised heating but the cause was not clear

Alan Preece, the project leader, said that the suspect heating was "mild" but said that further tests were required. His team has already begun testing to see if the microwave transmissions can effect blood flow and to learn more about the cause of the heating.

His suggestion of a heating effect is controversial as telephone firms say that there is insufficient microwave power from mobile telephones to pro-

duce such an effect. They say that if there is any heating, some other mechanism must be at work.

The study was funded by the Department of Health and by trustees of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust. It was carried out amid fears that mobile telephones may cause stress, memory loss or even cancer.

The volunteers did not know if the telephones were switched

or off, or if they were emitting analogue or digital signals. Dr Preece and colleagues speculate that the signals may be having an effect on the angular gyrus, a ridge-shaped part of the cerebral cortex of the brain which acts as an interface between the visual and speech centres and which lies under and on the same side as a mobile telephone.

"Such an effect could be consistent with mild, localised

heating or possibly a non-thermal response which is, nevertheless, power-dependent," the team concludes. The effect of the microwaves seems to be to speed the flow of electrical signals through the angular gyrus but it remains unclear why this should happen.

Although the effect is not damaging, opponents of mobile telephones are likely to use it as evidence that the phones affect the brain. If an apparently beneficial effect can exist, then a damaging one is equally possible.

Devices sold to protect mobile telephone users against microwaves offer some benefits but at the cost of worse reception, tests commissioned from the National Physical Laboratory by *New Scientist* have shown.

The laboratory tested the Microshield and Oyster Radiation Eliminator. They used two mobile telephones: a Nokia 2110 and Motorola MR30. Field strength was tested inside a head made of a human skull covered in mock flesh.

When the telephones were used with their antennae down, the Microshield cut the field strength inside the head by 34 per cent for the MR30, and 17 per cent for the Nokia, while the Oyster cut the field by 49 per cent with the Nokia, and 16 per cent with the MR30. With the antennae up, both devices were less effective and made reception worse.

The best way to limit the brain's exposure, the magazine concludes, is to use a "hands-free" set which enables the telephone to be worn on a belt. This cuts exposure to the brain by 94 per cent with no loss of reception, but other parts of the body are exposed to microwaves.

SYMPTOMS AND RESEARCH

Cancer

In 1997 researchers at the Royal Adelaide Hospital in Australia spent 18 months exposing mice to microwave radiation at the intensity and frequency emitted by digital mobile phones. Twice as many mice developed lymphomas, a cancer of the lymph system, as those not exposed. But three other teams have tried and failed to replicate the result. In the latest study, scientists at Brooks Air Force Base in Texas exposed mice genetically engineered to be susceptible to breast tumours to microwaves for 20 hours a day for 18 months, but saw no increase in cancer rates. Michael Repacholi, who is co-ordinating research for the World Health Organisation into the health effects of electromagnetic radiation, told *New Scientist* that he is reserving judgment on his study until it can be replicated. "If they don't come up with the same result, that will be a happy outcome," he said.

Heating the brain

Claims that mobile phones can heat the brain have been treated sceptically until now. Even if true, the degree of heating would be much less than that achieved by mild exercise, and unlikely to have long-term effects. More worrying would be evidence that microwaves have a subtle and previously unknown effect on cells. Today's evidence from Bristol University hints at such an effect. Research at Nottingham University, led by David de Pomerai, has shown that exposing nematode worms to microwaves produces heat-shock proteins. These are produced by cells in response to many kinds of stress in addition to heat. These experiments could not have generated sufficient heat to produce the heat-shock proteins, so Dr de Pomerai believes there may be a separate mechanism at work.

DNA damage

Henry Lai, of the University of Washington in Seattle, claimed in 1995 that rats exposed to microwaves showed breaks in their DNA of the kind caused by carcinogenic chemicals or X-rays. If so, one would expect microwaves to cause cancer if exposure lasted long enough. But two teams — in St Louis, Missouri, and Belgium — have since failed to replicate the result. The World Health Organisation is now spending \$6 million, partly funded by mobile phone firms, on an epidemiological study that will compare 3,000 brain tumour patients with 3,000 controls to see if there is any difference in their mobile phone use.

Headaches and tiredness

A study from Sweden last year showed that people who made frequent mobile phone calls were more likely to complain of headaches and tiredness. But people's expectations can colour such studies. Users in Norway, where mobile phone fears had been publicised, were twice as likely to complain than those in Sweden, where fewer such stories appeared in the media.

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'Corrie' makes US debut 38 years on

By CAROL MIDDLEY

CORONATION STREET is finally to be shown in America 38 years after the first episode was broadcast.

Television executives are confident that the regulars of the Rover's Return, who say "by cck", eat hotpot and drink pints of Newton and Ridley bitter, will conquer an American audience raised on more glamorous epics such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty*.

A deal was announced yesterday between Granada Media International, part of Granada Television which makes and produces *Coronation Street*, and Trio, the drama, documentaries and film channel in the United States which is broadcast nationally on satellite and cable.

American viewers will join the show during its 1994 episodes when Tina, a barmaid at the Rover's, embarks on a torrid affair with the local romeo, Des Barnes (now deceased in the soap), behind his girlfriend's back. Executives decided they could not risk going further back than this because fashions and hairstyles would have been too outdated for 1999.

A spokeswoman for Granada Media International said: "We had to find a suitable point to start where the storyline was dramatic enough to hook a new audience but where people's clothes wouldn't look too odd."

The soap, which has been running in Britain for 38 years, has been sold to more than 35 countries.

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Jake Bettelley with his parents, Jill and David. The boy was given two days to live

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

Mohammed Reia, the consultant surgeon who carried out the operation, said: "In the absence of a suitable donor, Luke would certainly have died. Jill and David have both been marvellous throughout and were very brave and positive, which helped us do our job well."

By HELEN RUMBELOW

Richard McNutt had told his fiancée that he had to delay their wedding plans until he received a kidney transplant. His intended, Dorothy Zauhar, persuaded her brother to donate one of his kidneys. After the operation was successfully carried out in 1997, Mr McNutt married a nurse in the dialysis unit and Ms Zauhar sued her former fiancé, accusing him of "theft by swindle of body organ".

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The murder suspects — from left, Jamie Acourt, Luke Knight, David Norris, Gary Dobson and Neil Acourt — were interviewed separately

Lawrence plea fails to keep suspects off TV

BY CAROL MIDDLELEY
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

The first interviews with the five men suspected of killing Stephen Lawrence will be broadcast tonight despite protest from the black teenager's family.

The men will break their silence on *Tonight*, a new ITV current affairs programme, in a series of "rigorous interrogations" by the journalist Martin Bashir. Last night Granada TV executives were in discussions with the Lawrence family's lawyer, Imran Khan, over allowing the boy's parents, Doreen and Neville, to see the interviews prior to broadcast.

Jeff Anderson, the Editor of *Tonight*, insisted that the programme did not provide the men — Jamie and Neil Acourt, Gary Dobson, Luke Knight and David Norris — with a platform to protest their innocence. He said: "The programme includes significant

POLICE TO PAY £1m PROTECTION BILL

The Home Secretary faced new protests over the Stephen Lawrence report yesterday after it emerged that the Metropolitan Police is footing an extra £1 million bill arising from its bungled publication (Philip Webster writes). An appendix to the report inadvertently included the names and addresses of witnesses to the teenager's murder. It was hastily withdrawn and a witness protection and relocation scheme put in place. The responsibility for the oversight was admitted by the inquiry team, although the Home Office faced strong criticism for not spotting the blunder. Sir Norman Fowler, the Shadow Home Secretary, told Jack Straw last night that a great deal of the responsibility rested with him and his ministers.

new material that may open new avenues of inquiry for the police. However, we are confident that it will not prejudice any possible future prosecution. The programme is a rigorous and detailed interrogation of the five men and in no way provides them with a platform. No areas of questioning were off limits and no payment was asked for or made."

ed by Trevor McDonald, which is modelled on American television's *60 Minutes*. It was central to the network's argument that it would maintain its commitment to serious news and current affairs programming despite scrapping *News at Ten*.

Mr Bashir, who conducted the *Panorama* interview with Diana, Princess of Wales, and was accused of being overly sympathetic to the British au pair Louise Woodward when he interviewed her, is said to be "tough to the point of hostility" with the men. He insisted on interviewing them separately at a neutral location and the men were not allowed to confer with each other about questions they had been asked.

The Metropolitan Police has started legal proceedings under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act to gain access to all the tapes, which amount to several hours, whether or not they are used in the final

broadcast. None of the five has faced a full trial for the race murder. A private prosecution begun by the Lawrence family in 1995, after the Crown Prosecution Service had decided not to proceed, ended with three being acquitted at the Old Bailey after evidence was ruled inadmissible. Charges against the two others had been dropped.

Ros Howells, a friend of Mr and Mrs Lawrence, said: "These five men have had ample opportunity to say what they want to say at the inquest and at the judicial inquiry. At both they were told they were free to speak and they avoided answering the questions."

Last month, the men's mothers gave an interview to John Humphrys, of Radio 4's *Today* programme, in which they protested their sons' innocence and vowed to campaign to clear their names.

TV listings, page 51

Anger at adviser's switch



The Scottish National Party accused Labour of "blurring the lines between government and party" yesterday following the appointment of a former Treasury civil servant to the Holyrood election campaign. Mike Russell, the SNP's chief executive, has demanded to know why Ed Milliband, who resigned his post as an adviser to the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, last week, is now working on Labour's Scottish campaign. Mr Russell added: "If Ed Milliband did resign last week, has he been guaranteed his old job back? It appears to be a matter of convenience." A Labour spokesman said that Mr Milliband resigned so that he could work in Scotland during the campaign and would not be paid from public funds or have any involvement in Treasury business while undertaking party work. "This is entirely consistent with Cabinet Office procedures," the spokesman added.

A question of address

Lord Steel of Aikwood took time out from his party's manifesto launch to praise the ingenuity of postal staff in the Scottish Borders who had delivered a mysteriously addressed letter to his home in Selkirk. The former Liberal leader wrote yesterday to find the missive from a woman in Warwickshire on his doormat addressed to "Mr David Steel, The Labour Party, Scotland". Someone in the postal sorting office had recognised the recipient and had scribbled Lord Steel's postcode on the envelope.

Greens slip on banana

The Scottish Green Party issued its first press release of the election campaign, condemning American intransigence in the banana war and calling for consumers to boycott bananas grown by the large commercial producers until the U.S. agrees to withdraw high tariffs on imports such as Scottish cashmere. Less than an hour later, the trade war ended in an agreement. "We weren't aware that it was about to end," a party spokesman said. "However, it is good news."

'May sanity prevail'

Candidates for the Scottish parliament were urged not to follow Tony Blair's example and call each other "innuendoes", "nutters" or "crazy". Karen Prentice, of the Scottish Mental Health Association, said: "It is unacceptable for Tony Blair to talk of headbangers in the Shadow Cabinet, men in white coats, and innuendoes taking over the asylum. Our language is still riddled with derogatory terms. Perhaps devolution will pave the way for a more polite and enlightened parliament."

Quote of the day

Jim Wallace, the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, launching his party's election manifesto:

"Education is the key to Scotland's future. Without high quality education Scotland will not be able to compete in a world economy. The Scottish Liberal Democrats commitment to Scotland's education system will restore us to world class levels."

AGENDA

Today: The Prime Minister, on a two-day visit to Scotland, is travelling to Largsmouth on board Labour's battleship, Paddy Ashdown is attending a press conference in Edinburgh before going to St Andrew's with the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, Jim Wallace. The SNP launches its manifesto in Edinburgh and the Conservatives open their election campaign in Edinburgh.

Brown brand SNP a 'high tax' party

BY JASON ALLARDICE
AND GILLIAN HARRIS

GORDON BROWN stepped up Labour's Scottish election campaign yesterday by claiming that "dangerous" and "caring" nationalists would make poor Scots poorer.

The Chancellor said that the choice facing voters in the Scottish parliamentary election was between Labour's focus on enterprise and fairness and the Scottish National Party's high tax and incompetence.

Mr Brown, speaking in Glasgow, delivered one of his hardest-hitting attacks on the SNP so far. He said that its commitment to "forego" its penny income tax cut to invest in public services would "drive business away and cost jobs".

"Tax revenues would then fall. Less money would be available for public services," he said. "The result would be to leave many people who work hard day in and day out still struggling to make ends meet while they pay more in taxes."

Mr Brown also attacked the SNP's refusal to support international action in Kosovo and said that the party "wouldn't take Scotland out of NATO".

Earlier, Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, unveiled details of Labour's pledge, which includes:

- A Scottish "drugs" enforcement agency, which would seize the assets of suspected dealers without waiting for criminal convictions.
- No income tax rises during the first term of parliament.
- Twenty thousand modern apprenticeships.
- At least four modern computers for every Scottish classroom.
- New hospital developments and a 24-hour NHS direct telephone helpline.

The Liberal Democrats' manifesto published yesterday promised 2,000 more teachers and an end to university tuition fees for Scottish students. Jim Wallace, the party's Scottish leader, said the penny tax cut would be foregone only if savings could not be made from the existing Scottish Office budget.

Stabbing accused 'played up to camera'

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A MAN celebrating a friend's stag night was stabbed almost to death by a member of a group that was being videotaped by a film crew, Manchester Crown Court was told yesterday.

The court was told that Paul Massey, 39, the alleged assailant, and three friends were under the influence of drink and excited by the attentions of the film makers when they attacked the party's minibus outside a nightclub, Peter Wright, for the

prosecution, said that Massey, of Salford, Manchester, smashed one of the vehicle's windows, chased it through the Manchester city centre, then stabbed 29-year-old Wayne Wisdom so badly that he needed eight litres of blood and plasma to save his life.

Massey, Gregory Hayes, 30, of Withington, Manchester; Mark Booter, 34, of Blackley, Manchester; and Paul Flannery, 39, deny conspiracy to commit violent disorder in Manchester last July. Massey pleaded not guilty in

wounding Mr Wisdom with intent to do grievous bodily harm and Booter denies assaulting a police officer with the intention of preventing Massey's arrest.

The jury was told that an independent film crew had been following the four accused as they drove round Manchester in an Audi and a BMW.

They used two cameras to film the group as they travelled around nightclubs behaving in a high-spirited and increasingly disorderly fashion. Mr Wright said

that they were "playing up to the camera" and "a disaster waiting to happen".

Mr Wisdom was one of a party of more than 30 people from Leeds who had travelled to Manchester for the night. After the car chase, the court was told, Mr Wisdom was seen to headbutt Massey, and Massey was then seen to lunge towards Mr Wisdom with a knife in his hand. Mr Wright said that the jury would see film footage taken by the crew during the evening. The trial continues.

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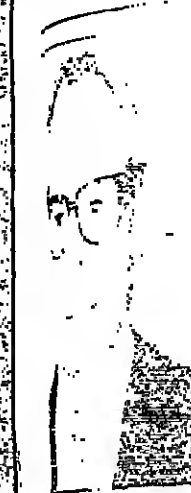
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Little wonder is a big shock for auctioneers

A SMALL painting that Christie's labelled as the work of a minor 19th-century artist, worth no more than £800, has been identified as a previously unknown landscape by Thomas Gainsborough worth at least £80,000.

The 18th-century work was spotted by Angus Neill, director of Fildes Fine Art in London, who said: "I knew it was the best picture I'd ever seen in my life. I'm astounded that a picture of this quality should have been overlooked."

He acted on his instincts and bought the painting at auction, when rivalry from four other bidders took the price to £30,000. His find, which measures about 22.8cm by 19cm, has now been acclaimed by Gainsborough experts although there is disagreement on how high its value may go. Mr Neill claims that it could ultimately fetch £500,000.

He believes that it is among works mentioned in the will of Gainsborough's wife and left to her daughter, Margaret. Two of them, the same size as this example, are in the Tate Gallery. "It's a very beautiful,

'Minor' painting valued at £800 was unknown Gainsborough gem, reports Darya Alberge

simple composition of a wooded landscape with country house and two figures," Mr Neill said. "It was a highly personal and intimate picture painted for the family. They must be the tiniest figures he ever painted, just a few millimetres tall." Rica Jones, conservator of paintings at the Tate, described it as "a ravishingly beautiful painting".

Mr Neill's research showed that the painting had surfaced in 1856 in the collection of Wynn Ellis, who left several works to the National Gallery. "He didn't know it was Gainsborough and consigned it to Christie's in 1856. It was then miscatalogued as a James

Arthur O'Connor." Last April, he said, it was with auctioneers in Newbury and classed as 19th-century Continental School. "It was bought by a dealer for £200 who then consigned it to Christie's South Kensington," Mr Neill said. He bought it last July. "Their catalogue said it was by Thomas Churchyard, estimated at £600 to £800."

Hugh Belsey, curator of Gainsborough's House in Sudbury, Suffolk, described it as "a very attractive little picture" which he would like to add to the museum, where the two Tate pictures are on loan.

John Hayes, former Director of the National Portrait Gallery and a Gainsborough scholar, described the painting as "a beautiful little work — a perfectly genuine early work". He thought its value was closer to £80,000.

Mr Neill pointed out that a small 18th-century painting by Alexander Cozens, "with a similar gem-like quality", came up for sale at Sotheby's last year. It was estimated at £50,000 to £70,000 and fetched more than £400,000. "That's what they go for: people are not after names but quality. This painting has never been published. It is completely fresh."

Coming to Christie's defence, Dr Hayes said that so many paintings came "hurting" through the firm's sale-rooms that "it is easy to overlook these things". A spokeswoman for Christie's South Kensington said: "We cannot comment this far after the sale."



Angus Neill with his find: "I knew it was the best picture I had seen in my life"

Husband who exposed drugs ring is found dead

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A LORRY driver who was praised for his role in smashing a drugs smuggling ring has apparently killed himself after fearing that his wife had left him to take up drugs again.

Christopher Brooker, 50, became an informant because his 34-year-

old wife, a mother of five, was a heroin addict and he had seen at first hand the effects of hard drugs on family life. With a £10,000 price on his head, he was helped to assume a new life in a safe house but he soon returned home to Hursthead, near Rochdale.

Greater Manchester Police said that Mr Brooker was found by officers

dead on his bed last week. There were no suspicious circumstances. A letter sent to *The Rochdale Observer* before his body was found made clear that he wanted to kill himself because his wife had left him. He claimed that she had returned to a "life of drugs".

In September 1997 Mr Brooker tipped off the authorities when he

was offered £20,000 to ferry heroin, cocaine and amphetamines worth £2 million from Belgium for sale in Manchester's nightclubs. He telephoned an information hotline saying: "I don't care about the money. I just hate drugs and I want to stand up to those who profit from them."

Customs and Excise officers tracked the drugs across Europe to

an industrial estate near Rochdale, where they moved in. After the arrests Mr Brooker went into hiding with his wife, under a new identity, and lived in fear of revenge. His evidence to Minshull Street Crown Court, Manchester, in December helped to send the five-man gang to jail for a total of 31 years. An inquest will be held into Mr Brooker's death.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New lawyers ordered for bomb-plot Britons

The British judges who are trying eight British Muslims in London for their alleged role in the 1988 bombing of the court in Manchester have ordered that they must have a new set of lawyers. The court has ordered the defendants to pay for the new lawyers. The court has also ordered that the new lawyers must be approved by the court. The court has also ordered that the new lawyers must be approved by the court. The court has also ordered that the new lawyers must be approved by the court.

Root climber killed

The body of a 45-year-old man was found hanging from a tree in a park in London. The man was identified as a root climber. The police are investigating the death. The man was found on Monday morning. The police are investigating the death. The man was found on Monday morning. The police are investigating the death.

Timely loon Male police mafia claim

Two women, a man and a dog were found dead in a park in London. The police are investigating the deaths. The women were found on Monday morning. The man was found on Tuesday morning. The dog was found on Wednesday morning. The police are investigating the deaths. The women were found on Monday morning. The man was found on Tuesday morning. The dog was found on Wednesday morning. The police are investigating the deaths.

Rower takes on Pacific

A British rower has been selected to represent his country in the Pacific. The rower is a member of the British Rowing team. The rower is a member of the British Rowing team. The rower is a member of the British Rowing team. The rower is a member of the British Rowing team. The rower is a member of the British Rowing team.

Donkey dies at 55

A donkey has died at the age of 55. The donkey was a member of the British Donkey team. The donkey was a member of the British Donkey team. The donkey was a member of the British Donkey team. The donkey was a member of the British Donkey team. The donkey was a member of the British Donkey team.

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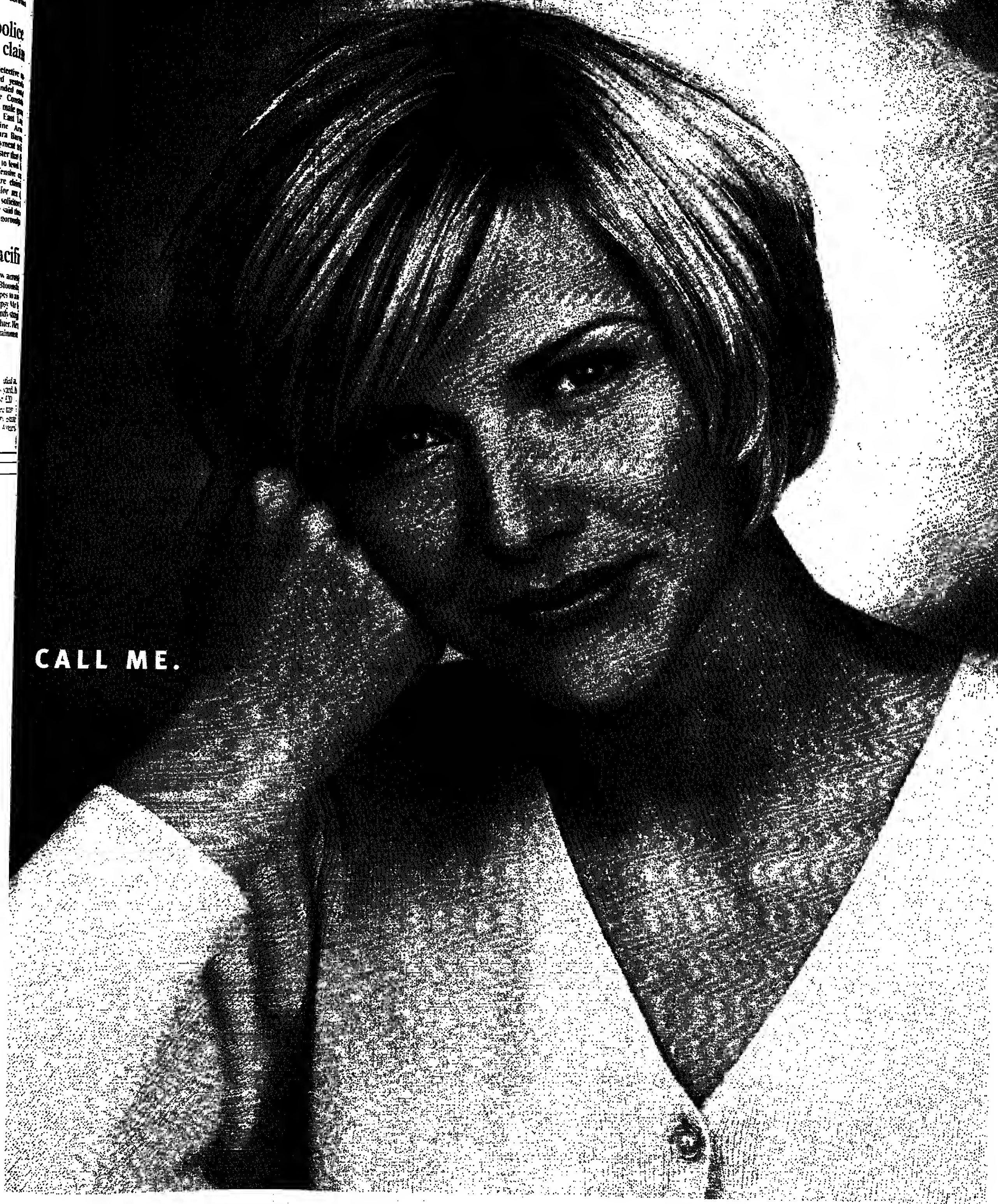
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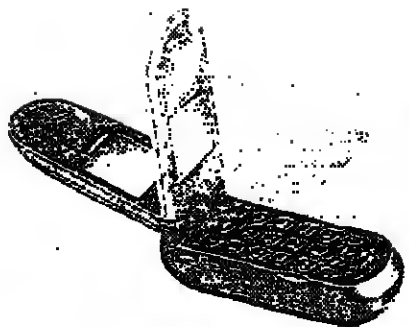
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Beijing smiles amid spy row

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN WASHINGTON

A CHARM offensive in the US by Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Prime Minister, hit its first serious obstacle yesterday, despite a vaunted breakthrough on trade, when the Energy Department abruptly announced it was stopping scientific work on computers at three nuclear weapons laboratories after allegations that China has stolen secret nuclear technology.

The espionage row is only one of several tense issues hanging over the nine-day visit by Mr Zhu, the first by a Chinese Prime Minister in 15 years. Since President Clinton's breakthrough trip to China last summer, relations have steadily deteriorated, with disputes over human rights, China's vast trade deficit and most recently the bombardment of Yugoslavia.

Following Mr Zhu's arrival in Washington yesterday, Mr Clinton delivered a conciliatory address in which he said that bringing China into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was firmly in the interests of the US.

Mr Zhu also tried to start his tour in Los Angeles on a jocular and positive note, announcing the lifting of a ban on some US agricultural products as a "breakthrough" in negotiations for Beijing to join the WTO and joking about the spying charges.

The 70-year-old Chinese Prime Minister, who will visit six American cities, told a California audience of China's plans to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the People's Republic next October with a display of the latest military technology, and drew astonished



A Chinese interpreter joins the laughter at a joke by Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Prime Minister, during a welcoming reception in Los Angeles

gasps by adding: "These weapons were developed by China itself, not stolen from the US."

Mr Zhu's wit appeared somewhat misplaced, however, when *The New York Times* reported the suspension of scientific work on computers at nuclear weapons laboratories in Los Alamos, Sandia and

Lawrence-Livermore. Thousands of scientists reliant on the computers containing the most secret files would cease normal work and instead attend training courses on computer security, officials said.

Last March Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwanese-born scientist at Los Alamos, was fired for allegedly breaching security at the laboratory after a three-year investigation by the FBI.

At a banquet, Mr Zhu dismissed the growing crop of disputes as "nothing more than a small episode in the long history of friendly relations between China and the US". To begin his tour in the right vein,

Mr Zhu announced a lifting of the ban on wheat imports from seven US states and citrus fruits from four states.

"This agreement is the most important part of China's bid to enter the WTO," Mr Zhu said, adding that he was confident that other areas of disagreement would be ironed out

to allow China into the body regulating international trade.

China has been seeking admission to the WTO for 13 years, and Mr Clinton struck a similar note of optimism about the chances of reaching an agreement, although the White House said "substantial" gaps remained.

Scholars pinpoint lost Galilee village

Jerusalem: As up to four million pilgrims prepare for a millennium visit to the Holy Land, a site has been identified close to the Sea of Galilee that will enable them to transport themselves back to the time of Jesus (Christopher Walker writes).

The Jerusalem Post reported that a mound 1½ miles north of the sea has been accepted "by a growing scholarly consensus" as the site of the lost village of Bethsaida.

Abraham Rabinovich, an archaeology expert, wrote: "The village was home to at least three of the 12 apostles."

Bethsaida is associated in the Gospels with Christ's healing of a blind man and the miracle of the "feeding of the multitudes". Many regard it as a more authentic site for pilgrims than the gimmicky proposal to allow them to "walk on the water" on a pier just below the surface of the Sea of Galilee at Capernaum.

Fugitive Russian tycoon 'to return'

FROM ANNA BLINDY
IN MOSCOW

BORIS BEREZOVSKY, the fugitive Russian billionaire and former Kremlin power-broker, said yesterday that he would return to Moscow next week to see prosecutors and did not fear being detained despite an arrest warrant against him.

Mr Berezovsky, who is wanted on corruption charges, told a news conference at a Paris hotel that he blamed a warrant issued for his arrest on Yevgeni Primakov, the Russian Prime Minister.

He said he had no quarrel with President Yeltsin, but feared that Mr Primakov was attempting improperly to use his post

to influence Mr Yeltsin, the media and the Russian secret services.

Yuri Skuratov, the Prosecutor-General who was suspended by Mr Yeltsin last week, confirmed that warrants had been issued for Mr Berezovsky's arrest.

The billionaire was dismissed as executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States last week. He said the authorities stopped his private plane from entering Russian air space, preventing him from attending the meeting.

It is widely assumed that the warrant for Mr Berezovsky's arrest, and that of Aleksandr Smolensky, creator of the bank SBS-Agro, also announced this week, is linked to the power struggle between the

Government and Mr Skuratov. Mr Smolensky is in Austria.

One of the main charges against Mr Berezovsky concerns his dealings with Aeroflot. Millions of pounds of the airline's profits are said to have been hidden in a Swiss bank account under the name of a company called Andava.

Valeri Okulov, the Director of Aeroflot and Mr Yeltsin's son-in-law, has so far cooperated with investigations into the case but it will be difficult for him to claim that he was ignorant of the disappearance of such vast sums. If Mr Okulov is implicated, the scandal will directly involve the Yeltsin family and is likely to destabilise Russia's political situation further.

Three Rwandan ex-ministers held

Arusha: Three former Rwandan government ministers implicated in the 1994 genocide of 800,000 people have been arrested exactly five years after the slaughter began, officials at the United Nations tribunal sitting in Tanzania said. The three were arrested in Cameroon. They include Jerome Bimumpaka, the former Foreign Minister who justified the murders at the UN, and Justin Mugenzi, the former Commerce Minister, who allegedly urged Hutus in a series of radio broadcasts to "kill all the Tutsis". The third suspect is Prosper Mugiraneza, who ran Rwanda's civil service in the interim government set up in the first days of the genocide. (Reuters)

Delayed homecoming

Seoul: A South Korean soldier listed as killed in action during the Korean War has returned home after fleeing the North, the South's National Intelligence Agency said. Sohn Jae Sool, 67, who said he was captured by Chinese troops in 1950, escaped from the North last October and arrived here with his wife, daughter and two North Korean defectors through an unidentified third country. (AFP)

Borneo mob fired on

Jakarta: Thousands of Malay and Dayak villagers, demanding the release of those jailed after earlier violence against Madurese migrants, rioted when outnumbered Indonesian forces fired on them. More than a dozen people were killed in Singarawang in Indonesian Borneo. Witnesses said troops fired warning shots but the mob surged forward. In Maluko, eastern Indonesia, religious rioting flared between Christians and Muslims. (AP)

Bullets overcome sword

New York: Commuters dived for cover as police shot and wounded a man waving a samurai sword at a crowded railway station (James Bone writes). Charles Stevens, 55, who had stopped taking his medication for schizophrenia, ended a stand-off with police on the Long Island Railroad by lunging at them with a 3ft sword. Police responded by opening fire, hitting Stevens eight times. Five passengers received minor injuries in the incident.

Blast at Franco's tomb

Madrid: An explosion has damaged Franco's tomb in Spain's Valley of the Fallen, a huge mausoleum carved out of a hillside near here, a fire brigade official said. No one was hurt in the blast, which damaged the area around the altar. The Marxist guerrilla group, October First Anti-Fascist Resistance Group (Grapo), claimed responsibility for the attack. (Reuters)

Hun Sen backs down

Phnom Penh: Hun Sen, the Cambodian Prime Minister, said the country would allow foreign judges and prosecutors to take part in the trial of the Khmer Rouge leader, Ta Mok, to ensure the process meets international standards. The new policy reverses his earlier stand that a trial must be under Cambodian law even though the judicial system is not up to the task. (Reuters)

Police aim to please

New York: The Big Apple's gun-toting police will in future be yelling: "Freeze, please" (James Bone writes). Amid growing protests about police brutality, the New York Police Department has launched a politeness drive and ordered officers to carry a card reminding them to call members of the public "Mr" or "Ma'am", and to address teenagers as "young lady" or "young man".

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Health for Life



Dr Thomas Stuttford reports on new treatment for scarring; why the solar eclipse in August is worrying ophthalmologists; Bruce Chatwin and the truth about his fungal disease; the benefits of eating tomatoes; and research that links long-term oesophagitis and cancer

Healing the scars of war

The recent *Times* headline "Air raids scar city of culture on the Danube" applies not only to the damaged bridges of Novi Sad but also to the human casualties. It is easier to restore the burnt bridges and houses that have been burnt than it is to recreate the various layers — the epidermis and dermis — that form human skin.

Regrettably, many of those burnt or wounded will be scarred for life but war casualties of the future may fare better thanks to research being conducted in Britain. An application for a patent for burns treatment being processed in London may ultimately benefit — through restoration of their appearance — those who suffer burns during wartime.

A research team directed by Dr Claire Ling, working for the charity RAFT (Restoration of Appearance and Function Trust) at Mount Vernon Hospital in Middlesex, has applied for a patent for a secret remedy for hypertrophic (overgrown) scarring — the type of scarring that affects 30 per cent of adult burn victims and between 40 and 60 per cent of children who suffer similar injuries. Scarring, though, is not confined to burn damage; other causes include accidents, surgery and even skin diseases, including acne. Nearly three million people in the UK have a facial scar, and a similar number have one more than six inches long. More than two million have scars that upset them.

Once the British team has obtained the patent rights, it hopes to start on further experimental work. Within two or three years this should lead to clinical trials and, later, the introduction of modi-

fied treatment that will give victims who would otherwise have had red, raised, itchy, painful and disfiguring scars less unsightly flat white ones.

The most common cause of serious scarring is surgery; it gives rise to 37 per cent of all significant scars, with the most prevalent site being the abdomen. Most people can remember inspecting the scars of schoolmates who had returned from hospital, but the surgeon is interested, too, and is apt to exhibit his handiwork to those prepared to pause by the bedside.

The best surgeons leave the neatest scars but they may be defeated by a patient's skin type. If a patient has a tendency to have a hypertrophic scar — red and raised rather than flat and white — not much can be done about it. The injection of a corticosteroid, triamcinolone acetonide, may flatten some, while various forms of Silastic gel sheeting may make them less prominent.

A small percentage of patients have been helped by more exotic treatments. Recently a doctor in India tried injecting papaya juice into these scars. It was a small, uncontrolled trial but the juice seemed to be effective in reducing the scar in some, but not all, of the cases. The long-term effect is unknown.

There seems to be no definable genetic reason why some people develop hypertrophic scars and others do not, and in some patients only part of the scar may be hypertrophic; in a long scar there may be a comparatively scarless break in its continuity.

There is, however, another form of unattractive scarring, keloid scarring, which is genetic and affects certain races. In some races, more



Proper eye protection is essential for anyone watching the total eclipse in August. The naked eye can suffer serious damage from looking directly at the Sun

THIS year August 11 has a greater significance than simply being my grandson's birthday. It is the day when a full solar eclipse may be viewed in Cornwall, the first time in the UK for more than 70 years, and the last time for another 91 years.

The total eclipse will last only two minutes but the period just before and after total eclipse is already causing alarm among ophthalmologists. The Institute of Ophthalmology linked to Moorfields Eye Hospital, the Royal

Protect your eyes to view eclipse

National Institute for the Blind, the Royal College of Ophthalmology, the Royal Greenwich Observatory, the Department of Health and a host of other organisations are doing their best to reduce the incidence of eye damage, which seems as inevitable as burns on Guy Fawkes night.

The organisation Fight for Sight, which was launched at the

Institute of Ophthalmology, is flying over an American schoolboy as a terrible example of how sight can be lost by not taking precautions. He used a viewing device, previously recommended, to see a partial eclipse of the Sun last year in North Carolina. It gave inadequate protection and he now has a sight-threatening black scar on the retina of his left eye.

A BBC weather forecaster, also worried about eye injury, wanted to demonstrate, when we last had a partial eclipse in the UK, the damage which could be done to a sheep's eye. It was considered too gruesome to broadcast.

Over-exposure to the Sun's rays causes two types of damage: photochemical, also known as phototoxicity, and photothermal retinal

injury. Phototoxicity is the result of exposure to excessive ultraviolet light; it can be temporary. Photochemical retinal injury is the result of infra-red damage in which photo-coagulation destroys the rods and cones of the retina, leaving permanent scarring.

At the moment there is no accepted treatment. If the viewer looks straight at the Sun, damage is done to the fovea, the part of the eye that we use when recognising people, watching their lips as they talk, or when reading or driving.

than 70 per cent of those injured form keloid (from the Greek meaning "tumour-like") scars. This is a hypertrophic scar gone mad.

The keloid scar is red and raised, shiny and hard, and it grows and grows, extending beyond the original cut or puncture wound. Dr Ling knew of one case in which a young girl had her ear lobe pierced and ended up with a lump of scar tissue the size of a tennis ball. She hopes that the new Mount Vernon treatment might be extended to help keloid sufferers and wants to secure funding for this research.

● RAFT, Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 2RN. Telephone: 01923 835815. Scar Information Service, PO Box 2003, Hull, HU3 4DJ. Telephone: 0845 120022.



Aids victim: writer Bruce Chatwin

THE recent biography and revealing TV film of the writer Bruce Chatwin explored his approach to HIV and Aids, and his refusal for a long while to admit to suffering from anything worse than a mysterious Chinese fungal disease.

In fact Chatwin was not lying; he did suffer from a fungus, *Penicillium marneffii*, which was rare at the time he caught it. It was associated with South-East Asia and was only occasionally seen in Europe. Chatwin wrote about his experiences in a British clinic and there was apparently amazement when the fungus was first isolated from his skin lesions. The microbiologists, used to identifying common fungi from between cracked toes, thrush, or occasional Aspergillus from a case of farmer's lung, were astounded by what they saw

Rare fungus that caught up with Chatwin

beneath their microscope. To the question "I don't suppose that you have been haymaking in South China recently?" the very English patient of a very English clinic replied: "I was there only last week."

Like any fungal infection, *Penicillium marneffii* in an immunocompromised patient can spread from the skin. On TV an infected patch was obvious on Chatwin's face, but this can give rise to a deep systemic infection, almost impossible to eradicate in the immuno-compromised — as in his case. As with

any opportunistic fungal infection, it may penetrate the blood and be carried to other sites. The patient is likely to suffer from pneumonia, urinary tract infections and diarrhoea from gut complications. The skin lesions are white and raised, they may be papillomatous or may resemble the blistering spots of *Molluscum contagiosum*, a viral skin disease that may be spread sexually and flourishes on thin, sensitive skin, or the fine skin of children.

Penicillium marneffii has spread rapidly among HIV sufferers in South-East Asia and is commonly seen in dermatological and genito-urinary clinics, for instance, as an opportunistic infection in those patients whose resistance, and white blood count, is lowered. It has travelled a long way from South China.

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It's true, tomatoes really do you good

Simultaneous, contradictory views concerning tomatoes, one piece written in this column, and one elsewhere by a nutritionist, generated a surprising amount of correspondence from confused readers.

Rest assured, there is sound scientific evidence to support the nutritional value of tomatoes and their constituent lycopene, an antioxidant that is present in abundance. This should certainly prevent tomatoes being condemned along with caffeine and tobacco.

Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant. Oxidation can be destructive, for instance when, in the form of rust, it destroys elegant, unprotected wrought-iron gates that have stood for centuries. People are not always aware that oxidative damage can occur in the fragile, vulnerable cells of the human body as a result of the action of the oxygen in free radicals. Free radicals are highly active atoms, or groups of atoms, capable of damaging

DNA in cells and even the fat of the cell membranes.

The role of antioxidants in foods, such as those found in vitamins C and E, and polyphenols, flavonoids like lycopene and some minerals including selenium and zinc, is to counteract free radicals. Antioxidants therefore contribute to a longer, better quality of life by inhibiting the production of atheroma, the fatty substance within arteries that clog the channels, and by reducing malignancies.

Lycopene gives the colour to tomatoes, pink grapefruit, watermelon and guava. It is more readily available to the body once tomatoes have been cooked or processed. If it is true that Harold Wilson, the former Prime Minister, really did love ketchup, he certainly didn't deserve to develop cancer because, weight for weight, tomato ketchup is second only to pasta sauce as the richest source of lycopene. A glass of tomato juice contains more lycopene than a whole bowlful of

tomato soup. Alcohol encourages the absorption of some flavonoids and so it is possible that a Bloody Mary may be more nutritious than neat tomato juice.

Many antioxidants are found in fruit and vegetables and the general rule is that the brighter the colour, whether rich green, deep orange or dark red, the better they are likely to be in their cardioprotective and anti-cancer role. Research has shown that people with high levels of lycopene were only half as likely to have a coronary thrombosis as those with low levels.

Recent research in the United States shows that ten large servings a week of tomato sauce halves the incidence of cancer of the prostate. A new study, financed by Heinz, which is understandably delighted by the effect of tomato sauce on the heart and prostate, is investigating the potential role of tomatoes in preventing cancers of the digestive tract and breast.

THE gardener who has indignation when he stoops to weed the border, or the older overweight patient who suffers from heartburn, with reflux of stomach acid into his throat when lying flat after a meal, should take these minor afflictions more seriously.

Recently the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the British journal *Pulse* have reported on Swedish research which showed that a person who has gastro-oesophageal reflux and heartburn once a week was seven times more likely to develop a cancer of the oesophagus (gullet) than a

Indigestion and the link to cancer

control group matched for age and other variables.

If this wasn't alarming enough for those who have to be wary of eating large meals late at night or of being too vigorous after a meal, the research uncovered a more disturbing result. Patients with "longstanding, severe symptoms" of oesophagitis were 43

times more likely to suffer from cancer of the oesophagus. Before indigestion sufferers rush to demand examinations, they should realise that the study involved only a small group of patients.

Even so, the journal suggests that those with recurrent severe symptoms deserve investigation with endoscopy and biopsy. Treatment of GORD, gastro-oesophageal reflux disease, persisting despite weight loss and other conservative measures, has been immeasurably improved by the introduction of the proton pump inhibitors.



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Every nerve in me screams 'it hurts'



In the final extract from his book, Chris Moon describes learning to use his new arm and leg and how he overcame pain and exhaustion to complete the London Marathon

Have you seen that game where prizes are laid out in a big Perspex cylinder and you try to clutch them with a little grab crane? Using the hook is just like that. The false arm fits over the stump. It's a nice fleshy colour with a steel racket end fitting where the hook clips in. The hook is held on by straps and works like a lever, with a cable linked to a band around my left shoulder. The jaws open when I stretch out my arm and thick rubber bands force them closed when my body relaxes, taking tension off the cable.

LAST NIGHT the nurse picked out the stitches from the large scabby scar below my knee. Next week the physio thinks they'll be able to take a cast and make my new leg.

The occupational therapist asks: "Would you like to make something with the Meccano? It's a good way to practise using the hook." I spend the next hour constructing a lorry.

The next day is Sunday. Most of the others have gone home for the weekend. After breakfast I turn on the TV to watch the London Marathon, see the magic moments of people of all ages doing their best. Some are in tears as they finish. As I watch them pound the streets I know that next year I must do the marathon.

At 5.30 I prepare to go out alone for the first time. I push myself over the ramp and through the gate. It's important to me to get round on my own. I roll down the drive and along the pavement, as I reach the kerb something happens that I hadn't anticipated — I'm terrified. It's a drop of only a few inches but I haven't done anything like this before. Perhaps I should get somebody to help me. The street is empty. If I do fall out, I think I'll be able to get back in on my own but don't want anybody to see. I stick my leg down and let the wheelchair drop. I make it and get up the other side by turning the wheels backwards. When I get back to the hospital I go to bed early.

I'M HAVING the first leg fitting! I slip a sock over the stump and put it into the moulded white foam socket. Then I push it into the false leg and do up the leather strap above the knee. John, the prosthetist, makes a mark on the top of the false leg and asks: "How does it feel?"

"Fine. Can I try it?" I stand up. John checks the leg. My heart tells me to try to run. My head tells me to take it easy. I take slow, small steps and grip the bar with my left hand. I step forward carefully. When I put the false leg down the pressure feels uncomfortable. I gradually gain confidence and improve slightly. I soon graduate to using the two sticks and get out of the bars. I walk a little farther each day and practise my gait. I still have a limp. They say it will take months to get it right. If the consultant thinks the scar has healed sufficiently and the leg fits, I can go home soon. "What about running?" I ask.

"In some cases it's possible, but it will take time. Without a lower leg, you require 30 per cent more energy to walk. When it comes to running, the stress and pressure through the stump are enormous."

At last my discharge day arrives. April 28. I've done it. I'm out in less than two months.

THE sound of splashing echoes around the vast concrete building. I walk cautiously along the tiles by the side of the pool. By the deep end are some benches. That would be the best place to take my leg off. I should be able to hop to the side from there. On my right is

a woman with her daughter. As I go past she holds the girl's hand and says "Shh..." I reach the bench and sit down awkwardly. I put the towel down. Now they can all see I haven't got a hand either. I pull the leg off. I don't want to risk standing up. I try crawling but the tiles are too hard on the stumps. I edge back to the bench and push myself up with my left hand, driving my left leg up. I jump up the last bit and wobble like a flamingo in a force ten gale.

I turn the wobble into forward motion and shuffle across the tiles. It takes all my concentration. When I near the edge my foot slips slightly. I crawl the last metre. I never knew it was possible to feel more naked than naked. I get to the edge of the pool and sit with my left leg in the water. It will be over my head. But I want to go in at the deep end.

I look up and realise the whole place is silent. Two ladies are swimming towards me, their eyes locked on to my stumps. The other swimmers paddle and watch. I try to throw myself into the water. Instead I slip in and sink: it's deeper than I thought.

I kick and paddle to the surface and take a deep breath. I try treading water. It feels strange but it's not difficult. Now I'll try breaststroke. Problem is, I tend to go round in circles. I adapt my stroke and head down the pool towards the two dragons. As I pass them I say: "Good morning, ladies." They smile. "Well done! You're doing tremendously."



Marathon Moon: Chris finished in 5hr. 39min

One day I get up just after seven. I'm going to try a long walk with a short run. I'm going to do two miles. I walk through the village to the track that leads to the Downs. When I reach the wood I focus on the gate. I promised myself I'd run to it. I move my legs up and down. When I put the false leg down I get no response; I keep trying. The stump feels sore and gets sorer. It's not easy, takes everything I've got. I stop at the gate. That was harder than an eight-mile hill run.

I'M GOING to run again! Twice a week to begin with. I'll just walk and then jog one length of the football pitch alternately for 15 minutes and then try to jog all around the outside to finish. It's sensible to start gently: all my muscles have wasted. I walk to the edge of the field and prepare to burst into action; a leopard poised to race across the field. The reality, sadly, is closer to a three-legged dog trying to make it to the nearest lamppost. Disappointment engulfs me. Every nerve screams "it hurts!" instinct tells me to lie on the grass and cry my eyes out. How will I do a marathon?

I rest for a few days, then have another go. I'm 25 seconds faster than last time! As I head for home the leg slips and

I fall. The lanyard cord has broken, the leg has shot into the road. A bus is speeding towards me, near the kerb. I wave. "Please God, don't let it run over my leg."

It works. I pick it up, hop to a wall and examine the lanyard fitting. I can't fix it so I put my stump back in the socket and hold it on with my good hand as I walk slowly home.

I'M NOT sorry I have to go to London to get the leg repaired. It gives me a chance to see Alison. She understands my attitude to life and never tells me I can't do things.

On Sundays we usually go for a walk. Today we're driving to woodland to see the autumn leaves. As we walk between the beech trees I think how good it is to be alive. We hold hands and I struggle to keep up but she knows I don't want her to slow down. As we turn a corner she smiles at the chocolate box view of a village. As I look into her eyes I think: I'd like to grow old with her.

We emerge near a tea shop. As we wait for our tea I rest my false arm on the table. It's held on partly by suction and as I move it makes a sound like a loud fart. The place goes quiet. The woman at the next table whispers to her husband "Disgusting."

"I'm sorry," I tell Alison. "It does that all the time."

The man at the next table spits out his tea and giggles uncontrollably. I feel a need to explain further so I pull the arm off slightly and press it on the chair hard: the noise is even louder. The bloke spits out another mouthful of tea and starts everyone laughing. Alison is laughing, too. She's definitely the girl for me. From late January I run with Alison every Sunday. She slows down so I can keep up. When I get back from a run I'm too exhausted to do anything but sleep. By late March the farthest I've run is seven miles. Will I manage 26.2?

ALISON leans over the barrier, kisses me and says "Good luck!" I kiss her back.

"Thanks. I'd better get going." I move into the crowd before she sees my fear. Nobody else could notice but she might. Around me is a wall of runners, nearly 40,000.

Way ahead the starting gun booms and a cheer ripples back through the runners. We wait forward and gradually accelerate to a jog. Even by my standards this is slow. As we leave Greenwich the road slopes downhill. I make use of the incline to increase my pace. People along the pavement shout encouragement. I'm covered in sweat and I've only done five miles. All my energy goes into putting one foot in front of the other. I feel sick.

One foot in front of the other; ignore the discomfort. This is the fastest I've ever done nine miles. I'm lying.

A sign up ahead says ten miles. The pain has started. I try to ignore it. I can't feel the stump. I must check it. I lean against a lamppost and undo the strap holding on the leg. I take it out of the socket and massage the stump. After a few seconds the pain subsides. I see the Thames. Tower Bridge must be close. Up until now I've enjoyed the run. Now I'm knackered.

I'm not giving up. As I cross Tower Bridge I hear Alison: "Go on Chris. Go for it!" All I want to do is lie down and sleep. I move as if I'm running through treacle.

We're nearly there. I can push with everything I've got now. I'll soon be able to stop. I force my tired legs onwards. I take deep breaths. We turn into The Mall, where there is a sea of people. I try to encourage the other runners:

"Go for it, we're nearly there!" People are cheering. For a moment the pain vanishes. I make a dash for the finish. Five hours, 39 minutes. People cheer. I see Alison. She kisses me and says: "Well done. That's one of this year's goals achieved. What's next?"

I lean on her, glad to take some of the weight off my false leg. "How about getting married in August?"

She smiles and says "Yes".

● Extracted from *One Step Beyond* by Chris Moon, published by Macmillan, £16.99. Times readers can buy it for £14.99 by calling The Times Bookshop, 0990-134 459



Chris Moon feeding his son, Gordon: making things with Meccano proved a good way of practising to use the hook

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Gordon's Man Friday goes north

English spies will find little to intrigue in the Scots elections

I rather fancy Charlie Whelan as the Daniel Defoe of his day. Gordon Brown's sometime press adviser has come to Scotland to cover the elections as a journalist and commentator. Most people suspect he may still be acting as the Chancellor's eyes and ears — a gatherer of intelligence about the state of the nation as well as a discreet propagandist for his former master.

In much the same way did Defoe travel north in 1706, a year before the Act of Union, following a Whelan-style fall from grace. The author of *Moll Flanders* and *Robinson Crusoe* had begun his career as a son of 18th-century spin-doctor, a familiar figure in the corridors of power who incurred the displeasure of the Government by publishing a scurrilous pamphlet that leaked hostile information about establishment figures.

Defoe paid a rather stiffer price for his indiscretions than Whelan did for dishing the dirt on Peter Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson: he was sentenced to stand in the pillory, pay a fine, and be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure in Newgate Prison. He eventually negotiated his release by cleverly suggesting a new role for himself — passing clandestine information on the forthcoming Union between England and Scotland to Robert Harley, later Earl of Oxford and the leading statesman of his time.

I doubt if Mr Whelan will have as exciting a time as his predecessor. Within days of arriving, Defoe was watching the mobs storm through the streets of Edinburgh, protesting against constitutional change. "A terrible multitude came up the High Street... shouting and swearing and crying out all Scotland would stand together. No Union. No Union. English dogs and the like," he wrote. He added that he was risking his life by being there and that "a Scots rabble is the worst of its kind". Defoe, it seemed, favoured the tabloid approach to journalism.

Mr Whelan's approach is likely to be a little more restrained. For one thing, he will see no violent protests on the streets: indeed he will be lucky to find the mob stirred to any greater action than switching channels on his TV sets when it comes around to news time. The various campaigns launched this week seem likely to revolve around issues so well-rehearsed that they have long since ironed out any lingering ability to surprise or alarm. When, during yesterday's press conference, the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, Jim Wallace, announced that one of his party's distinctive policies would be to improve disabled access, he conceded that this might not mean "storming the barricades". A sudden image surfaced, then sadly receded, of massed wheelchairs surging through the capital.

The fact is that these Scottish elections, despite reinstating a parliament in Edinburgh and ushering in the greatest constitutional reform of the century, have not yet broken the traditional pattern

of a Westminster campaign. The Scottish National Party has staked its claim to the left-wing vote by announcing its intention to raise a penny more in tax, spending it on health, education and housing. Its leader, Alex Salmond, has predicted that "Scotland's penny" would rally support from disillusioned Labour supporters, and has issued a postcard with ten promises — similar to Tony Blair's election credit card, which carried five. There is little here to inject real drama: it runs from spending more on schoolbooks to abolishing the tolls on the Skye Bridge. It downgrades the party's single most distinctive policy — independence — to tenth place, a sign, perhaps, of Mr Salmond's anxiety not to frighten the electorate with anything too radical.

Labour, operating a Millbank-style campaign from its Glasgow headquarters, is also anxious not to rock the boat. Its poll ratings have recovered significantly in the past few weeks, and it seems likely to rely more on warning Scots about the dangers of nationalism than making extravagant promises about the powers of a new parliament. Yesterday's main revelation was that the party intends to seize the assets of drug barons, hardly the most challenging of ideas.

Only the Tories, revelling in the freedom that stems from a total power vacuum, can afford to be adventurous. They have come up with the most radical proposal so far — a commitment to remove control of schools from local authority, education departments and devolve their management to school boards. Their chances of implementing it, however, despite the opportunities offered by proportional representation, remain minimal.

It has been left to the Balkans, an area where the remit of a Scottish parliament is unlikely to run, to inject any real life into this lacklustre affair. A radio debate between the four leaders on Tuesday turned venomous when Mr Salmond proposed pulling Nato out of the Kosovo conflict and imposing an oil embargo. Donald Dewar, for Labour, accused him of advocating policies that would lead to the extermination of the Albanians in Kosovo. Listeners, polled by the radio station, expressed more passion about the refugees than they did about any Scottish issue.

These are, of course, early days, and Mr Whelan may have more to report as the battle buses parade their election messages about the country. But he is unlikely to reach any more startling conclusion than the one that Defoe reported back to Harley 293 years ago: a United Kingdom which preserved the separate identities of the Scots and the English while drawing them closer together would, he said, "preserve not destroy; secure not endanger; confirm not undermine". It was no more thrilling to read then than it is today. But it made just as much sense.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Magnus Linklater



"THESE MEDIA INSULTS PLAY RIGHT INTO MILOSEVIC'S HANDS..."

Target Milosevic

Nato leaders deserve better from their critics. But the West must escalate the war, says David Hart

A thoroughly dangerous line of argument is beginning to emerge from the fog of the Balkans war. Some, mainly conservative commentators, both here and in the United States, are arguing, directly or by implication, that Nato should not be acting against President Milosevic. Some simply support the Serbs and think that they should be allowed to bring stability to the region, however brutally. These commentators have been less active since the pictures of the hopeless refugees have been filling our television screens. Others argue that Nato will fail in its attempt to coerce Mr Milosevic and that the West's actions will lead to the demise of the world's most successful military alliance.

These critics' motives cannot be certain, and may be as stated, but it is hard not to believe that some of them may be uneasy at the prospect of centre-left politicians like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair achieving a military success.

If Nato does fail, the future of the alliance will be in doubt. But so will the system of moral values that the Western world upholds. Then these critics will say that they have been vindicated. They will not have been. Instead, they will have become the servants of a re-emergence of barbarism in Europe.

There is no difference, except of scale, between the Nazi extermination of Jews and the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Albanians by Mr Milosevic and his colleagues. Let the critics differentiate, if they can, between the horror people felt in 1945 as the true scale and depravity of the Holocaust became clear and the horror we feel today. We witness on our screens the dead bodies of unarmed men, not members of the Kosovar Liberation Army, who have been systematically taken out of their homes and herded into fields and shot, often after their families have given money for their lives to be spared.

There is absolutely no difference in moral degradation between the actions of the murder squads organised by Mr Milosevic and those led by? Sawoniuk and all the other Nazis and Nazi sympathisers in the Second World War. Both sought material gain from their actions, looting and stealing the property of Jews and Albanians. Both murdered unarmed civilians because of their race. Both display a kind of moral sickness that is

irredeemable. If Chamberlain and Daladier had had the courage to act against Hitler, say after Kristallnacht in 1938, many millions of Jews would have survived to live normal lives. It is wholly right that Nato's political leaders, including the Americans and Canadians, have decided at last that barbarity will not be tolerated in Europe.

As soon as the first Nato bombs fell, Mr Milosevic was bound to react. Perhaps the speed and brutality of the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo took some Nato leaders by surprise. But carping about being unprepared to succour the refugees, or about changes in Nato objectives, is very far off the mark.

Mr Milosevic may have made a significant if appalling move in Kosovo, but on the chessboard of conflict it is not the first but the last significant move that counts.

It is clear that Mr Milosevic's actions in Kosovo have changed the strategic environment so that Nato has no option now but to create a protectorate in part, or all, of Kosovo to which the displaced Albanians can, and will, return. That raises the vexed question of the use of Nato ground troops. Nato leaders are agreed that ground troops will be needed to police any settlement that is made with the Serb Government. Nato is ready with a well-prepared plan and some forces are in the area. An opposed Nato incursion into Kosovo is an entirely different matter. It would require something like 200,000 troops and involve significant casualties.

It is understandable that the Americans do not want to commit ground troops to a European war. It took Churchill almost two years and significant help from the Japanese to persuade them to join us in the war against the Nazis. The American public does not yet have the will for a fight far away from home to save people they do not know and who speak a different language. But, if Mr Milosevic cannot be

stopped by air power, Nato will either have to face defeat or ground troops will have to be deployed.

We are entering the most dangerous moments of this conflict so far. In the ensuing days the will and courage of Nato's political leaders will be tested, as it has never been tested before. Mr Milosevic has already offered a tactical "ceasefire" this week and he will go on making offers designed to split the alliance. He may well even offer to accept Nato demands. But his record as a keeper of promises is not good. Even so, there will be intense pressure on Nato leaders to agree to a settlement, even if it is an unsatisfactory one.

Mr Milosevic is so steeped in blood that a negotiated settlement is now no longer tenable, unless he surrenders himself and his henchmen as part of the deal. That is a most unlikely outcome. Any conclusion to hostilities that leaves Mr Milosevic where he is, and his murder squads in tact, will come to be seen by the Western press and all sensible people as a defeat for Nato. The West has no option. It must escalate the conflict well beyond Mr Milosevic's expectations and calculations. He knows that Western leaders are civilised and do not like conflict. He has been banking on just that. It must be a fundamental figure in his calculations. The destruction of the Milosevic leadership must now become the principle objective of Nato military action. Nato must attack Mr Milosevic's political infrastructure, his colleagues and the man himself. It is too late for threats of improbable arrests, lengthy arguments in The Hague at war-crimes trials and life imprisonment. Civilised and satisfying though that would be, and despite the Lockerbie suspects' incarceration, it will not happen to Mr Milosevic.

No more midnight attacks by cruise missiles against Defence and Interior Ministry facilities. The attacks should be timed to coincide with the maximum occupation of such buildings. The thugs who have organised the ethnic cleansing must be targets, not just their buildings.

There are those who argue that air power alone cannot force Mr Milosevic to comply with Nato. Certainly, there are not many precedents to gainsay them. Air power is crucially dependent on what or who is targeted, and how effectively. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of Libya shut down his state-sponsored terrorism after the Americans almost managed to kill him by aerial bombardment. Technology has advanced greatly since then. Even in the past five years there have been spectacular advances in accuracy and capability. It would be unwise for Mr Milosevic to think that Nato does not have the means to destroy him, even if it is reasonable for him to have supposed that it does not have the will.

Killing innocent and unarmed Albanians in cold blood is cowardly. Those who do such things are cowards. If Mr Milosevic and his murderous colleagues see the cruise missiles and the smart bombs getting rapidly closer to their own offices, their own homes and their own persons, I would be surprised if they do not sue for peace. If they do not, the Yugoslav National Army leadership may well take over and do it for them. There are senior officers in the Yugoslav army with a sense of honour proper to military men. They cannot be comfortable with the actions of their political leadership or with the daily sight of their men, equipment and military facilities being destroyed by a largely untouchable enemy.

There are no easy choices in war and no easy ways to stop evil men from committing acts of barbarity. However distasteful it may be for civilised Western leaders to contemplate, the destruction of Mr Milosevic and his murderous colleagues would bring the conflict to a speedy end and would avoid the uncertainties and far greater bloodshed of an inevitable and protracted conflict in the Balkans. It would also put other leaders on notice that the West will not tolerate barbarity in its midst.

The author was Independent Adviser to the Secretary of State for Defence 1993-97. Anatole Kaletsky's column appears tomorrow. comment@the-times.co.uk

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"The West has consistently seen air power as a kind of geopolitical one-night stand, offering gratification without commitment"

Dominick Donald

Ever since President Milosevic started his crack-down on the Kosovo Liberation Army 13 months ago, Western threats have been undermined by one refrain. "We will not send in ground troops until a settlement is agreed," chorused the foreign ministries. The tragic consequence of this policy is that ground troops will now have to be sent in, but at a time, and in circumstances, of Mr Milosevic's choosing.

Nato has, this week, at last allowed that ground forces may be committed. But only if they can be guaranteed "unopposed entry". Air power alone, it is argued, will create a "permissive environment" in Kosovo which allows Nato to police a de facto settlement.

But the proliferation of euphemisms cannot disguise the essential fallacy on which Nato policy still rests. You cannot police a

settlement unless you show the resolution necessary to enforce one. The West's readiness to use air power was supposed to show its resolve. But the West has consistently seen air power as a kind of geopolitical one-night stand, offering gratification without commitment.

The Western horror of open-ended military commitment inhibits Nato's capacity to use its military superiority to achieve its goals. Nato's principal military powers are still haunted by two previous interventions. In Somalia and Bosnia, troops committed before a deal was reached apparently had to choose between the irrelevance of waiting for the combatants to settle, or embroilment in a protracted conflict. Reason suggested that the best way to avoid another Srebrenica or Mogadishu was to refuse to commit troops until there was a settlement to police — no matter

how much any of the belligerents might beg for help. This would provide a clear mission, simple objectives and a swift withdrawal. And if the parties were reluctant to put down their arms, air power could push them to the negotiating table.

Washington's foreign policy establishment, with its gift for the revealing euphemism, coined a new phrase for this application of force from the skies which avoids any American casualties. It's called "immaculate coercion". But, like immaculate conception, this wonderful idea works only as myth.

The failure of the West to bring Serbia to heel during the Rambouillet negotiations revealed the fundamental flaw in "immaculate coercion". The Milosevics of this world will buckle only if they

believe you mean what you say. Yet deadlines were postponed and ultimatums ignored. Power is as much about political will as military means, and political will is best reflected by how much one is ready to risk: yet our leaders declared we would commit ground troops only if Mr Milosevic rolled over. By telling the Yugoslav leader we would not risk anything substantial we showed him our will was weak.

To talk now of "unopposed entry" only invites President Milosevic to finish his programme of ethnic cleansing, secure in the knowledge that the West will not risk lives to save lives.

The current failure of Nato policy on Kosovo stems in large part from the Western political

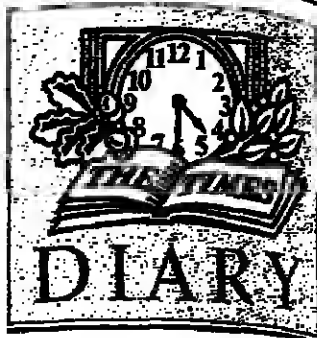
reluctance to understand that "no-casualty" intervention is a lethal fantasy. The best way to minimise risk is to maintain the initiative. But the Western refusal to deploy a ground force before a settlement handed that initiative to Mr Milosevic. It left the principal issue at stake — the Kosovar Albanians — in his unmerciful hands. And despite the disclaimers of the last week, it has long been clear that Mr Milosevic might drive them out: his ruthless conduct in Vukovar in 1991 showed what he would do when unrestrained. Now Nato will have to deploy a ground force. But the deployment will be on Mr Milosevic's terms. Who else but he will do the permitting in the "permissive environment" of which strategists dream?

A ground deployment was on the cards the moment "immaculate coercion" was launched. If Tony Blair and Bill Clinton had

thought this through, they would have set about building the political consensus for an early deployment. Then they would have been better placed to persuade Mr Milosevic to conform, and to ensure that the inevitable assault was mounted on our terms and thus with fewer casualties. Instead they indulged in the fantasy that the refusal to take risks shows strength of will. It does not. It simply increases the dangers. A ground intervention before the enemy is ready to settle can demonstrate will and shape a resolution, rather than simply execute it. Sometimes the best way to avoid danger is to confront it.

The author, a former soldier, is an academic in the Department of War Studies at King's College London.

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Paine's gain?

LORD ATTENBOROUGH'S republican campaign has received a sympathetic ear at No 10. The film director dined discreetly with Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's chief of staff, last Friday to discuss whether the PM would be prepared to lend indirect support to the anti-monarchy movement by unveiling a statue of Thomas Paine.

Attenborough, who plans to make a film of the 18th-century revolutionary's life featuring Daniel Day-Lewis, is the highest profile supporter of the Common Sense group. It is campaigning to have Paine's seminal role in the American and French Revolutions recognised in Britain by unveiling the statue on the day the last hereditary peer leaves the House of Lords.

IF BETTE DAVIS had been a little more pleasant in 1955 on the set of *The Virgin Queen*, Joan Collins (left) might have become a very different actress. "I was 19, working with Bette (right)," says the star of *The Bitch*. "She was so horrible that I said to myself, 'if ever I get to be a star, I am going to be as supportive as possible to new actors'."

KEN LIVINGSTONE owes his life to Dr Strangelove. The Labour MP, who as the former GLC leader declared London a nuclear-free zone, has disclosed that a doctor on a French nuclear test site in Africa saved his life.

While on holiday from his day job as a lab technician, Livingstone stumbled into the weapons facility while travelling across the Sahara in 1966. "I had terrible dysentery, had lost the use of both my legs and was clearly dying," he recalls.

"The nearest town was more than 500 miles away. In the middle of the desert, there was a barbed wire fence and a door with a bell which we rang. A Jeep drove over, a French doctor was summoned and my life was saved."

THAT pretty, albeit politically aware, boy of Britpop, Damon Albarn, wants to become Björk's soulmate. The lead singer of Blur, who owns a Reykjavik pad, has applied for Icelandic citizenship. "I feel uncomfortable in England. Iceland is a place I feel a kindred spirit with, and it's a way to stick two fingers up at the English Establishment."

WHEN I knock into Benny Anderson and Björn Ulvæus, the crooners who formed the middle letters of Abba, at the *Mamma Mia!* premiere party, they tell me a comeback is unlikely. "Look at us. We are too old to play the part." I demur from repeating their comments about how time has treated Frida and Agnetha.

A RETURN TO KITCHEN SINK DRAMA!

PRINCE EDWARD THEATRE MAMMA MIA



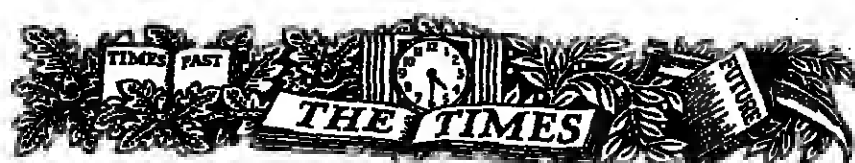
VICTORIA WOOD is to bail out David Blunkett. She expects to raise £15,000 in one night by performing a rare double act with Geoffrey Durham, her magician husband, for her child's school.

DOMINICK DUNNE, the American man of letters, claims he could have stymied the Lewinsky palaver if only he had believed the affair was possible. In the forthcoming *Vanity Fair*, he says he kept abreast of Linda Tripp's taping through a literary agent friend.

Before the messy business blew up, Dunne bumped into Vernon Jordan, President Clinton's golf buddy and legal minder, in a New York restaurant in 1997. "I decided to warn him that an intern of the President's was being taped."

"But the story suddenly seemed absurd. I thought that no one could be such a goddamned fool as to have an affair with a twenty-something in the Oval Office. So I simply mumbled 'Give my best to the President.'"

EDWARD WELSH



TO WILL THE END

Nato politicians must will the means for victory

Two weeks into the air war, Slobodan Milosevic at last begins to look like the loser that he must, at whatever cost, be eventually proved to be. The Serbian leader cannot have expected Nato to do other than kick away his unilateral "ceasefire" — a temporary and tactical ceasefire that has stopped neither attacks on Nato aircraft nor fresh atrocities against Kosovans. Its main purpose was probably to provide political camouflage for standing down his armour in Kosovo before Nato destroys it, as it has finally begun to do. He may even extend the tactic, since Nato assaults on his ground forces in Kosovo will be more devastating once the American Apache attack helicopters and multiple launch rocket systems are deployed. Whether or not he does so, this supposed ceasefire is an irrelevance.

Kosovo's Albanians continue to endure a living hell; but a massive allied relief operation is beginning to improve conditions for the hundreds of thousands of deportees forced into Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia. That operation must include proper coverage of the administrative, social and logistical costs incurred by these governments and their people; and broad economic support for them and for other countries in the region, such as Bulgaria, which face extensive economic damage as a result of a conflict that is not of their making.

The agony of the Kosovans has appalled Western public opinion, hardening their support for Nato. It has begun to convince even the most pacific and the most sceptical that this evil, unparalleled in postwar Europe, cannot stand — and that unflinching generous humanitarian relief, while essential and urgent, is a palliative rather than the solution that must be pursued.

That solution is their return, in safety, to rebuild their shattered lives; anything else would be a defeat for Nato and for humanity. There can be no peace that accepts the "facts on the ground" that Mr Milosevic has, in a calculated challenge, created. And there would in fact be no peace on those abject terms; for if the neighbouring countries had permanently to absorb most of the Kosovan refugees, Mr Milosevic would then have succeeded in destabilising the entire region.

Hard evidence accumulates that the atrocities in Kosovo are premeditated war crimes, that the methodical elimination of the Kosovan Albanians has been in preparation for months. The CIA was aware as early as last autumn of a plan, codenamed Operation Horseshoe, to kill or drive them out over several months. A village a day was the rate that Mr Milosevic calculated the West would wring its hands over without acting. In Pristina, public records have been combed to identify precisely which homes, shops and businesses were Albanian-owned; Serb police and paramilitaries have emptied towns and villages neighbourhood by neighbourhood in a pattern that has been as unvaried as it has been ruthless.

The packed trains, the snipers picking off those who strayed out of line on the forced marches to the borders: every detail points to the existence of a detailed blueprint, without which so many could not have been murdered or driven into exile within a fortnight. In this context, yesterday's reported sealing of the frontiers by Serb forces is a sinister development; there is no such thing as safety in Kosovo for a people marked for destruction solely because of their racial identity.

This, then, is a war that must be won — and must be seen to be won. Convinced of this, Western publics await, with mounting

impatience, a clearer articulation of what "winning" would look like, and how Nato proposes to get there.

On "winning", Nato's reiterated insistence that Mr Milosevic must accept "a political settlement based on the Rambouillet peace agreement" rings hollow. Even with extensive self-government, it left Belgrade in ultimate authority over Kosovo and gave it two years to withdraw its troops and paramilitary forces. Rambouillet is dead. That leaves only partition, or an international protectorate which Nato would have to police for years to come.

Partition may be Mr Milosevic's planned fallback. But it cannot be remotely on his terms. The only partition that could, after such brutality, be contemplated would create small enclaves around particularly "historic" Serb sites, with the rest of the province under the full control of the Kosovan Albanian majority. Even then, whatever moral sense such a settlement might make, it would most likely just set the stage for the next conflict.

A protectorate makes more sense. It would ultimately lead either to a Yugoslav confederation under a new constitutional settlement, or to independence. The choice would be Serbia's: if the Milosevic police state stays in power, independence would be the consequence. If his regime were replaced by a democratic Government committed, like that of the republic of Montenegro, to intercommunal tolerance, a confederation could just conceivably be accepted by the traumatised Kosovans; that would create the best conditions for durable political stability and the massive reconstruction that will be required.

But first Mr Milosevic must be defeated. Nato leaders still insist that this can be achieved by air power alone. They are not believed, either by their own publics or by Belgrade. It is time that they answered the question: what happens after the bombing? For now, the Alliance's priority is to hammer Yugoslavia's military infrastructure and the fighting strength and morale of its forces in Kosovo. But sooner rather than later, airstrikes will have achieved all that they can, short of destroying what is left of the modern Yugoslav state. These airstrikes may or may not succeed in creating the "permissive environment" which would enable people to start returning home under Nato protection. Even under the best scenario, Nato troops will require much heavier armoury than was envisaged at the time of Rambouillet. It is more likely that they will have to contend with armed Serb resistance, organised or "freelance".

There is no predicting if, or when, Mr Milosevic will admit defeat. There must be no question of a gap of weeks or months before Nato is ready to move in its troops. Nato started this campaign on the wrong foot; it must be adequately prepared for the finish, and be seen to be so.

Public support for committing troops, to a ground war if need be, is growing, with a majority now in favour even in the United States. The barbarity in Kosovo has seen to that. Troops can be swiftly deployed; but their equipment needs to be seaborne in the very near future. The Pentagon's announcement that 2,600 troops, equipped with main battle tanks and armoured vehicles, will move to Albania as "force protection" for the Apache helicopters, could be the preliminary moves in the direction to which the logic of this war inexorably points. There is no gain in politicians continuing to pretend that they are the only people who have neither given, nor are prepared to give, the proper thought to the Nato endgame.

YELLOW AND BENT

The EU's contorted banana regime must now be abandoned

For the fifth time in a mere six years an international trade panel has investigated the methods by which the European Union regulates the imports of bananas and found them wanting. On every previous occasion the EU has fiddled at the edges of its rules and avoided the substantive issue. As a result the EU and an increasingly frustrated United States have found themselves on the brink of a serious trade conflict. The decision announced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) yesterday represents the EU's last chance to reach an amicable settlement. If it does not, then nearly £120 million of retaliatory American sanctions will be imposed shortly, with a devastating impact on the Scottish cashmere industry among others.

The WTO arbitrators were required to pronounce on whether the EU banana regime applies quotas and tariffs to certain countries in a discriminatory fashion. It is not difficult to sympathise with the logic that led them to conclude that the present banana system is indefensible. The EU divides banana producers into three different sections: those within the EU itself; those from 12 specific African, Caribbean and Pacific nations; and others from those regions plus the so-called "dollar banana" suppliers from Latin America. The first two quotas are based on the highest previous levels of sales and are thus very charitable. The final quota is set deliberately low and, once exceeded, invokes utterly punitive additional tariffs.

Nor can this be defended as a necessary means of preserving plucky, poor, former colonies from heartless American-owned multinational corporations. The primary

cost of the current banana rules falls upon the hapless EU consumer. A modest £100 million is returned to a favoured few developing countries. Among those Latin American states hit hard by the EU's regulations are Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua: these are impoverished nations at the best of times and in dire straits after the damage inflicted by Hurricane Mitch six months ago. The complicated EU rules for allocating quotas within quotas has also tended to favour the relatively rich over their often poorer neighbours.

The broader macroeconomic effect is even more undesirable. The EU manages to distort the world banana trade in a manner that leaves producer nations at no net financial advantage. The consequence of deliberate delay in Brussels over the past six years is that a start has scarcely been made in encouraging those changes among the banana exporters of the West Indies — such as the consolidation of small plantations — that would reduce their costs and enhance their competitive position. The essential task of encouraging much-needed economic diversification in these countries has been similarly neglected.

The EU should introduce a non-discriminatory quota and tariff system or, better still, abolish quotas and tariffs completely. Sir Leon Brittan, the acting EU Commissioner concerned, promised yesterday to abide by the WTO decision but did not rule out continuing this battle. That decision will be delegated to EU members. They would be extremely unwise to persist in a struggle that is not in the interests of their consumers, or of international commerce, or even of the banana growers themselves.

Milosevic in pursuit of his 'final solution' in Kosovo

From Sir Reginald Hibbert

Sir, The idea of driving all the Albanians out of Kosovo has been canvassed sporadically in Serb nationalist theorising ever since the province was allocated to Serbia by the then great powers in 1912-13.

Governments in Belgrade have tried fairly consistently to make Albanians leave. They have had some success; but the Albanian population has multiplied and the Serb population declined as Serb families preferred not to stay in that relatively neglected, underdeveloped and overwhelmingly Albanian region.

President Milosevic and his Government are the first to try to put the theoretical final solution into practice. It is a final solution without gas chambers. There is plenty of killing, but perhaps not enough as yet to earn the name of holocaust in public estimation.

The cause of this final solution is not the bombing but the assessment made in Belgrade that the Contact Group plan put forward at Rambouillet implied that Kosovo would slip out of Serbian control in the next few years and that the ruin of the Greater Serbia project would be complete. The only way to prevent Kosovo becoming autonomous was to drive out the population which would exercise autonomy.

Those who flinch from Nato's action, or speculate about a negotiated endgame, or weigh up the possibility of dividing Kosovo should perhaps reflect on the shame and confusion which will overtake Europe if we fail for a second time to check and reverse the carrying-out of a final solution in this century. And the Russians, with their experience of pogroms and massacres, would be wise to recognise that a truly massive pogrom is occurring in Kosovo and avoid lending support to its perpetrators.

Yours faithfully,
REGINALD HIBBERT,
Y Ffordde, Penallt,
Machynlleth, Powys SY20 9JX,
April 6.

From Dr Raphael Papadopoulos

Sir, The most serious and lasting damage by the bombs and rockets is being inflicted on the international community and its collective institutions. Nato's action constitutes a clear violation of the rules of the international community and its own charter. Why

will a Nato-imposed selectivity in the use of military force be better for the peace of the world than the more balanced and consensual selectivity implicit in the UN rules?

Milosevic's behaviour in Kosovo, abhorrent as it is, is not unique. "Successful" examples of ethnic cleansing in Palestine, Croatia and northern Cyprus, to name the three nearest, suggest that ethnic cleansers consider war of any kind as a golden opportunity for a rapid acceleration of the process.

What seems to be different this time is the determined effort of some Nato politicians to channel the public debate by flourishing new rules of engagement for Nato and a selective view of history.

Yours sincerely,
R. PAPADOPOULOS,
52 Asmuns Place, NW11 7XE,
April 6.

From Dr Martin Evans

Sir, I totally support the principle of Nato military intervention to stop this abhorrent "ethnic cleansing", but, as our wiser retired generals have repeatedly reminded us, it will take a land army to do it. If we did not think we could win even with a ground force we should never have started this war.

Nato's faith in bombs as a means of persuasion is alarming for its naivety and our Government's intellectual dishonesty in pretending that we can successfully prosecute this war from a safe distance insults the intelligence and courage of the British people.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN EVANS,
35 Cavendish Avenue,
Cambridge CB1 7UR,
April 6.

From Mr Ansel Harris

Sir, Almost daily, Tom Walker has reported conditions and attitudes in Belgrade under Nato's bombing. But there are no reports of protests in Belgrade against the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. Nor, for that matter, were there during the earlier atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I do not believe, as was suggested in the BBC news this evening, that Serbians are ignorant of these crimes. Daniel Goldhagen's monumental study *Hitler's Willing Executioners*

(Little, Brown & Co. 1996) showed how widespread within Germany was the knowledge of Hitler's genocidal policies which, in today's terminology, would be described as ethnic cleansing.

It would appear that, like the Germans, the people of Serbia are disclaiming knowledge of the crimes being committed in their name.

Yours faithfully,
ANSEL HARRIS,
35 The Priors, NW3 1BP,
leams@msn.com
April 5.

From Mr Patrick Howarth

Sir, Slobodan Milosevic, who might otherwise have been adjudged a rather third-rate and readily forgettable political figure, seems likely to have been transformed by recent events into a national hero, whom Serbs will revere through centuries to come.

Indeed it may not be long before some enterprising Serbian impresario commissions an opera, of which Milosevic will be the hero.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK HOWARTH,
2 Pencarrow, The Avenue,
Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3AJ,
April 6.

From Mr Leon Gamsa

Sir, For the cost of a single cruise missile, how many leaflets could be dropped over Belgrade to make its citizens aware of the genocide perpetrated in their name?

Yours faithfully,
LEON GAMA,
54 Brampton Grove, NW4 4AH,
April 7.

From Mr J. C. Griffiths

Sir, As always, the Ancients have a saying for us: "When they make a desert they call it peace" (Tacitus, *Agri-cola*).

It looks as though the efforts of both sides to this conflict will leave Kosovo a region of abandoned villages and a ruined infrastructure.

Yours etc,
JOHN C. GRIFFITHS,
5 The Courtyard,
Waltham-on-the-Wolds,
Melton Mowbray, LE14 4RE,
April 6.

War crimes

From Mrs Irene Rosenberg

Sir, Mr Barry Baines comments (letter, April 5) that "a trail old man" has been convicted of crimes committed in 1942 and suggests that "the door be shut on the past".

Unfortunately, the past is so tightly packed with the corpses of millions of innocent men, women and children, and of many, many frail old people, that the doors just cannot be closed.

Yours faithfully,
IRENE ROSENBERG,
17 Fernhill Drive,
Redbridge, Uford, Essex IG4 5BN,
April 7.

Fires in tunnels

From Mr Alan Smith

Sir, It is hard for me to understand why the tragic fire in the Mont Blanc tunnel (report, March 27), or that in the Channel Tunnel in 1996, should have taken several hours to subdue.

A simple plug of fresh-air detergent foam, generated upwind of the seat of the fire, will rapidly extinguish it, while permitting refugees and firefighters to breathe. The fiercer the fire, the more rapidly such a plug will take effect, provided it is formed by spraying a light mesh screen, which can be rapidly erected to cover the cross-section of the tunnel.

This foam plug technique was developed at the Safety in Mines Research Establishment in the 1950s, and widely publicised in the mining industry at the time.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN SMITH,
(Chartered mining engineer),
63 Abbey House,
1a Abbey Road, NW8 9BX,
March 27.

Pupil selection

From Mr Donald S. Akroyd

Sir, Mr Edward Norman (letter, March 29) is so right in believing that selection will be distressing to the least gifted in the class who cannot become the "new elite".

It will be distressing for those in comprehensive schools to see a class-mate with four A levels proceed to Oxbridge; for those in the village team to see a friend playing in the Premier League; for a junior clerk to see a colleague rise to board level; or even for the parish priest to see a neighbouring priest elevated to a bishopric.

But then life is distressing, some are more equal than others and education must encourage the bright pupils and recognise that there will always be "also-rans".

Yours,
DONALD S. AKROYD,
The Stone Cottage, Barnwell,
Peterborough PE8 5FF,
March 29.

Judges' ruling on asylum-seekers

From Mr J. B. McGuinness

Sir, The Geneva Convention rightly lays down ground rules for the protection of asylum-seekers. However, the construction placed on the convention by the law lords by extending the concept of a "social group" to include women if their country of origin is perceived as having "institutionalised discrimination against women" (Law Report, March 26) is unwarranted and challenges the conventions regarding the relationship between the judiciary and the legislature.

Lord Hoffmann makes it clear that the delegates to the convention in 1951 were not contemplating as their intention that women should form a specified group entitled them to protection. Yet the law lords feel free to repair this omission from no other source than historical analogies and their own conscience, admirable though that is.

In extremis, judges may construct a meaning to a statute or treaty if this can be seen as demonstrating the intention of the legislating body. If the search for the purpose of the legislation could cause them to overstep their constitutional limits they step back

and leave it to the jurisdiction of Parliament.

In this case the law lords have stepped over the mark. As the final court of appeal on this matter they have created law. The only choice for the Home Secretary and Parliament is to bring in legislation reversing the judgment, which is unlikely.

Given that the Human Rights Act is currently on the statute book we face a situation of major constitutional significance. The judiciary is clearly feeling in a reforming mood and may challenge any legislation that it feels contravenes some universal human right. Parliament won the battle in the last century as to the right of judges to challenge statutes. In the next century the judiciary is clearly going to have a more powerful role.

The independence of the judiciary must be examined. The selection process will have to become more transparent and accountable. Parliament must recognise that it will have to forgo its present absolute sovereignty.

Yours,
J. B. MCGUINNESS,
22 Oswald Road,
Chorlton, Manchester M21 9LP,
April 3.

Speed-traps

From Mr Adam Ogilvie-Smith

Sir, There is no harm in publishing the locations of speed traps (report, March 24; letters, March 31 and April 7). The cameras' objective is to reduce accident rates, not to increase penalties to motorists.

My review of the Traffic Police in 1993-94, on behalf of the Home Office, revealed two key facts. First, the policy was to site cameras where there was a proven accident rate, not necessarily where speeds were highest. Second, some police forces had co-operated with the creation of "speed-trap maps": when one such city map was being made, the relevant police force alerted the map-maker to cameras he had missed — with the goal of reducing accidents at those locations, either by slowing or diverting the traffic.

Yours faithfully,
ADAM OGILVIE-SMITH,
Hyde House,
Longworth,
Oxfordshire OX13 5HH,
April 7.

Wedding gifts

From Mrs Cynthia Knowles

Sir, At their request we have given our daughter, and new son-in-law of ten days, a tandem (letters, April 2 and 5).

Yours faithfully,
CYNTHIA KNOWLES,
Square Fold,
26 White Lion Road, Amersham,
Buckinghamshire HP7 9JD,
April 6.

Marbles in the gutter

From Mr Murray Freedman

Sir, Mr Edward Wilcock's letter (March 27) about children playing "tots" (marbles) in the streets of Leeds, following your photograph (March 19), brought back many happy personal memories. One dialect word he mentioned that has persisted is "gin-nut" for alleyway, and "foreigners" to Yorkshire happily acquire its use when they settle amongst us Leodensians.

What I particularly remember as a Jewish child in the Thirties was playing "nuts" less than a mile away from where the photograph was taken at this time of the year — Passover. Hazelnuts were used in a variety of games, the origins of which I do not know. In one, empty matzo boxes had holes of various sizes cut in them and one had to roll the nuts through the holes to gain more nuts as prizes. In another game the holes and dips between the street cobbles were utilised. Winners over the season ended up with a great stock of hazelnuts.

Alas, along with the demise of the cobbles went the games — of which the present generation of Jewish children has probably never heard.

Yours faithfully,
M. P. FREEDMAN,
29 Sandhill Crescent,
Leeds LS17 8DY,
mpf@infnet.co.uk
March 28.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Medical efficacy of green tea

From Dr Anne M. Birrell

Sir, May I add a footnote to your entertaining editorial on the efficacy of drinking green tea ("Hot, wet and healthy", April 1).

The anecdote about the discovery of tea as a drink by the "servant of the Chinese Emperor Shen Nung" is triply apocryphal. Shen Nung was not an historical emperor and the dates given are a traditional invention.

Shen Nung was a god whose name translates as God the Farmer. Besides being the god of agriculture, he was also the god and divine originator of medicine. His name was attached to the traditional pharmacopoeia, generally entitled the *Pen Tsao*, or herbal.

Far from being discovered and enjoyed in the 3rd millennium BC, *Thea viridis*, the tea shrub, was originally not indigenous to China but imported from India in the 6th century AD. Its link with God the Farmer, patron of medicine, is its medical efficacy, allegedly aiding drinkers as a diuretic, laxative, stimulant and cooling infusion, besides its use as an eyewash and lotion for sores. Its seeds allegedly cured coughs and tinnitus.

The Tang writer Lu Yu promoted its benefits in his book, *The Tea Classic* of AD 804, using the word *cha* for tea, whence *cuppa cha* in pidgin English.

Yours sincerely,
ANNE M. BIRRELL,
(Author, *Chinese Mythology — An Introduction*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993),
Clare Hall,
Herschel Road, Cambridge CB3 9AL,
April 1.

From Dr L. Fisch

Sir, Your leading article concerning the benefits of drinking tea mentioned William Gladstone: "If you are depressed it will cheer you; if you are excited, it will calm you."

A reason for the paradoxical effect of so-called psychostimulants was suggested by Dr J. Wilder in the *American Journal of Psychotherapy* (72,199, 1958) and other journals. He named this phenomenon "The law of initial values", according to which a change in any function caused by stimulation depends upon the pre-stimulus level of that function.

A commonly used stimulant, such as tea for example, has precisely the effect mentioned by Gladstone. A habitual smoker may light a cigarette to calm down, but when he or she is feeling low and depressed it may stimulate activity.

Doctors and others are puzzled by the paradoxical effect of psychostimulants (especially Ritalin, used to calm hyperactive children but which is also accepted as a stimulant). Nevertheless, Dr Wilder's important revelations seem to have disappeared into the dustbin of history.

Yours truly,
L. FISCH,
46 The Drive,
Harrow, Middlesex HA2 7EJ,
April 2.

Fired-up for speed

From Mr John Disley

Sir, Mr John Hunter, the winner of the World Coal Carrying Championships (photograph and caption, April 6) should be immediately signed up for the British Olympic team. His time of 4 minutes 27 seconds for the mile is astounding. It would mean that if he started at the front of next week's London Marathon he would be 200 metres ahead of the field at the mile post, with his 110lb bag of coal.

Of course, it could be that the Yorkshire timekeepers used a cuckoo-clock or that the course was measured by a car's mileometer, both notoriously inaccurate.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN DISLEY,
(Director),
The London Marathon Limited,
PO Box 1234, London SE1 8RZ,
April 6.

All you need to know?

From Mr Frank Horisk

Sir, In the TV listings of my local daily newspaper there appears this outline of the programme *Animal Hospital* on BBC1 on Easter Tuesday: "A kitten whose leg became trapped in its collar returns for a check-up and the vets perform an operation on a pet lizard with a swollen foot."

Does this show that John Birt's mission to explain has now been fully achieved?

Yours,
FRANK HORISK,
47 Church Street, Irvinestown,
Co Fermanagh BT94 1EJ,
April 6.

You have been warned

From Mr Michael Blakey

Sir, AA signs on a number of our local roads read: "April 10. Campaign for a Living Wage. Severe Delays Expected."

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BLAKEY,
1 Castle Farm Mews,
Castle Farm Road, Jesmond,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3RG,
April 6.

At times GMT Heights in miles.

HIGHEST & LOWEST



BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY APRIL 8 1999

Exporters baffled by banana war ruling



Barshfsky: trade test for Brussels

By CARL MORTISHED
AND SHIRLEY ENGLISH

WORRIED British exporters to America were left in a state of confusion yesterday after the European Commission failed to admit defeat in its long-running banana war with the United States.

Sir Leon Brittan, vice-president of the European Commission, said that Europe reserved its right to appeal, while at the same time insisting that it would abide by World Trade Organisation rules. He said: "The unilateral US retaliation currently in place against EU exports has been and remains largely illegal."

Washington, which is claiming victory in the banana war over trade restrictions between the two continents, poured scorn on the apparent Brussels prevarication yesterday. Peter Scher, a US trade official, said: "The arbitrator's decision is final and the EU does not have the right to appeal."

A WTO arbitrator yesterday awarded \$191 million in damages to the US, and a WTO panel ruled that aspects of the EU's preferential import regime for Caribbean bananas were illegal.

EU lawyers in Brussels were last night poring over the 160-page report from the WTO panel in Geneva. The report is not being released to the public, and delay will fuel

further anxiety among embattled cashmere knitwear firms in the Scottish Borders.

Mills around Hawick used a visit by Peter Chase, economic adviser to the US Embassy in London, to call on America to remove cashmere from the potential sanctions list and so safeguard 1,000 jobs. The Borders has been hardest hit by the banana war as almost half of all European and 90 per cent of British cashmere comes from the region.

The US has seen its original target list of exports worth \$520 million cut to \$191 million. A spokesman for the US Trade Representative said a revised list of import products would be issued in a couple of days but the UK is likely to figure large as a key sup-

porter of Caribbean banana growers. The UK Department of Trade & Industry was unable yesterday to offer any reassurance to British exporters. The confusion is in part caused by the lack of any precedent. A WTO trade expert explained: "No previous dispute has ever reached this stage before of arbitration and implementation."

Led by Ambassador Charlene Barshfsky, Washington has been using the banana dispute to test Brussels' commitment to the WTO rules. Beyond the banana row, another dispute is brewing over the EU ban on imports of US hormone-treated beef.

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Graham Searjeant
The two faces of
capitalism
in Sunderland
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STOCK MARKET
FTSE 100 5473.2 (+57.9)
Yield 4.0%
FTSE All Share 16554.50 (+74.79)
Nikkei 9975.70 (+12.21)
Dow Jones 1316.09 (+1.00)
S&P Composite

US RATE
Federal Funds 4.75% (4.75%)
Long bond 5.51% (5.51%)
Yield

LONDON MONEY
3-month interbank 5.0% (5.0%)
Libor 3m 117.99 (117.95)
Euro 101.9 (101.7)

STERLING
New York 1.5974* (1.5910)
London 1.5955 (1.5899)
S 1.4779 (1.4773)
SF 2.3585 (2.3582)
Yen 163.24 (162.47)
Euro 101.9 (101.7)

DOLLAR
London 1.5974* (1.5910)
S 1.4779 (1.4773)
SF 2.3585 (2.3582)
Yen 163.24 (162.47)
Euro 101.9 (101.7)

NORTH SEA OIL
Brent 15-day Jun 14.75 (\$14.83)
GOLD
London close \$280.05 (\$279.05)
Exchange rates

Rate hopes drive FTSE to fresh high

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

HOPES that the Bank of England will again cut interest rates pushed the stock market to a second consecutive record high yesterday, despite fresh evidence that the British economy appears to be heading for a "soft landing".

Services companies reported their strongest growth levels since last September while the pace of decline in the manufacturing sector also continued to ease.

Analysts, however, insisted that the Bank of England was more likely to be swayed by earlier data showing a sharp downward revision to fourth-quarter GDP and subdued earnings growth. The continued strength of the pound is also considered likely to persuade the Bank to reduce rates by a quarter point to 5.25 per cent at the conclusion of the Monetary Policy Committee meeting today.

Optimism that the Bank would cut rates was reflected in the markets. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed up 57.9 at 5,473.2, having earlier peaked at an all-time trading high of 6,496.1.

The pound, however, took heart from the stronger than expected new data to recover some of the ground lost on Tuesday, when it fell to an 18-month low against the dollar.

Sterling climbed more than half a cent against the dollar to

close at \$1.5956. It also regained some of the overnight losses suffered against the euro, although the single currency later held firm to close at 67.66p.

European markets also enjoyed a robust start to trading, buoyed by hopes that the European Central Bank will cut European rates after its policy meeting today. Paris stocks pushed to a year high at 4,318.04 but a mixed performance on Wall Street later took a toll on some markets with shares in Frankfurt closing virtually flat.

British manufacturing output fell by 0.1 per cent between January and February leaving the annual rate of decline at 1.4 per cent compared with 0.9 per cent in the previous month. However, overall industrial production rose by 0.1 per cent over the month helped by improved utilities and mining output.

The modest improvement in the manufacturing sector's performance was also supported by a separate report from the Engineering Employers' Federation, which confirmed the pace of decline was easing.

However, Alan Armistead, EEF chief economist, predicted that engineers would shed about 10 per cent of their workforce this year even if the pound began to weaken.

Employment rates in the service sector, however, have begun to grow again with the

services index climbing above the break-even level for the first time in five months. Analysts cautioned, however, that some of the sharp rise may reflect a seasonal increase in optimism and could be partially reversed in the coming months.

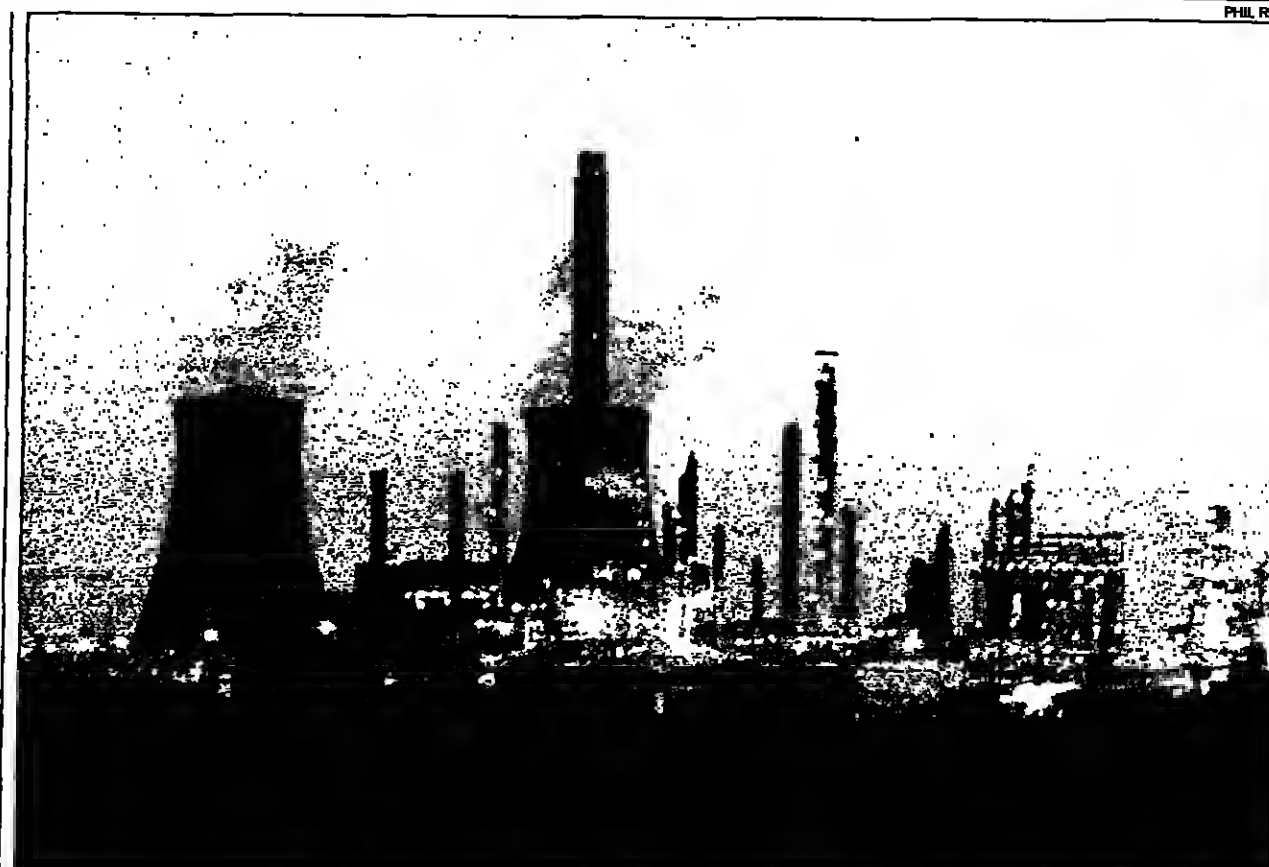
The return to growth has also come too late to improve overall economic performance in the first quarter of the year, according to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, which estimates first-quarter GDP growth at just 0.1 per cent.

Meanwhile, the World Bank yesterday cut its forecast for global growth to 1.8 per cent this year and gave warning that emerging markets were likely to suffer the brunt of the slowdown.

The Bank said in its Global Development Finance report that developing country growth would slip to just 1.5 per cent this year, compared with a previous forecast of 2.5 per cent, and was unlikely to return to trend until 2001.

The Bank added that with about half of all global growth during the past 18 months deriving from the US, world economic growth was at risk from a sharp correction on Wall Street.

LINKS
WEBSITE: www.bankofengland.co.uk



The site of the proposed Baglan Bay energy park, which Labour says is not "a ruse on the eve of the Welsh elections"

Byers approves gas station

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY AND JAMES LANDALE

THE Government yesterday did a U-turn on its energy policy by clearing the way for a £300 million new gas-fired power station in Wales, just weeks before elections for the Welsh Assembly.

Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, said that the station at Baglan Bay would not be blocked by the current "stricter consent policy" on new gas-fired stations. The *de facto* moratorium was announced last October in order to create a more balanced energy market amid a crisis in the coal industry and a rush to gas in power generation.

Mr Byers said the plans by General Electric and BP

Amoco would bring exceptional economic benefits and regeneration prospects. It has been claimed that up to 6,000 jobs will be created by the establishment of an energy park around the station with companies moving in to take cheap power.

John Redwood, the Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, said: "This is rank electioneering. Labour clearly believes the Welsh elections are worth a few closed pits in England. How many jobs will go as a result of this electoral gesture?"

CoalPro, the coal industry trade association, is to write to Mr Byers to urge him to keep the moratorium in place. It is

concerned that recent comments by Callum McCarthy and Mr Byers could result in an early end to the ban and lead to fresh uncertainty for coal producers.

The new gas station will push out about one million tonnes of coal as the market for the fuel is already sharply declining. The current coal burn in electricity generation is only about 40 million tonnes.

Peter Hain, the Welsh Office Minister, said: "This shows that the Labour Government is delivering for the people of Wales. But it is not a device or a ruse on the eve of the Welsh elections."

The Baglan Bay project, which still needs planning consent, will aim to develop 1,000 acres of industrial land. It is being backed by the Welsh Development Agency.

The power station is by far the largest to escape the moratorium. Smaller schemes with a large amount of environmentally friendly combined heat and power (CHP) have bypassed the ban. Baglan Bay's CHP element is speculative, the Government has conceded.

Other power companies are now expected to press for gas station consents.

Commentary, page 29

Winsor calls for tougher powers

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

JOHN PRESCOTT came under pressure from his newly appointed Rail Regulator yesterday to introduce tougher regulatory powers into forthcoming legislation.

While the Deputy Prime Minister insisted that existing powers for regulators were tough enough to bring improvements on the railways, Tom Winsor, the new regulator, made it clear that he wanted more.

Making his first comments since his appointment last month, Mr Winsor, the City lawyer who takes up his role in June, admitted that he had more powers than most regulators.

However, he added: "The

powers are lacking in some other respects in terms of enforcement of franchise obligations and legislation is required to improve those powers."

Mr Winsor has, in the past, frequently criticised his predecessor for failing to make enough use of powers available under existing legislation.

Mr Prescott has as yet been unable to find Parliamentary time for legislation to give statutory backing to the new regime governing the industry.

Yesterday he said that under the present regime the rules could be tightened on train companies seeking to extend their franchises.

Reed price dented by board strife

The directors of Reed Elsevier, the international publishing and information group, are to go back to their original shortlist in the continuing eight-month search for a new chief executive (Raymond Snoddy writes).

Late on Tuesday the Anglo-Dutch group admitted that its chosen candidate had turned them down.

The embarrassing failure to find a chief executive led to a 14p fall in the shares yesterday to 533p. A boardroom row over the issue led to the immediate resignations of directors Pierre Vinken, a former co-chairman, and Loek van Vollenhoven.

Commentary, page 29
Publishing division, page 31

BT takes stake in SmarTone

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

BRITISH TELECOM yesterday increased its presence in the Asia-Pacific region with the £240 million purchase of a 20 per cent stake in SmarTone, Hong Kong's third-largest mobile telephone operator.

Alfred Mockert, president and chief executive of BT Worldwide, said the deal was "an avenue to expansion in the greater China marketplace".

The SmarTone purchase takes BT's investments in minority stakes in the region to nearly £1 billion. As Asia-Pacific is seen as the engine of growth in telecoms markets BT's investments there could easily match its £3.5 billion expansion in Europe, Mr Mockert said. BT also said that it

was talking to a number of partners and looking at ways of increasing its stake in Japan, the world's second-largest telecoms market.

SmarTone is third in a market of six mobile operators in Hong Kong with an 18 per cent market share and more than half a million customers. BT believes that mobile penetration in Hong Kong will grow from its present 40 per cent to 60 per cent by 2001.

In the year to June 1998 SmarTone, a Hong Kong-listed company in which the Kwok family holds a 26 per cent stake, had profits of HK\$1 billion (£80 million).

Temper, page 30

Bluewater washes over Lakeside



Bluewater: excellent trading

BLUEWATER, the massive shopping centre that opened in Kent last month, has already proved to be a huge success — but at the apparent expense of nearby Lakeside and even London's West End (Sarah Cunningham writes).

Rowland Gee, managing director of the Moss Bros men's clothing group, said yesterday that its branches of Blazer, Cecil Gee and Savoy Taylor's Guild in Bluewater have traded very well while the equivalent three stores across the Thames in the Lakeside centre in south Essex have gone quiet.

"I was in Bluewater on Good Friday and it was heaving," he said. "I then went to Lakeside and I could have fired a cannon down the central aisle and not

hit anybody." Michael Bennett, the chairman of Oasis, the women's wear retail group, said that he already wished that his three outlets at Bluewater were larger: "Trading there is excellent."

A spokesman for Lakeside, which is ten minutes drive from Bluewater, however, countered: "We have seen no discernible effect in footfall which can be attributable to Bluewater."

Mr Gee also said that Oxford Street rents had started to fall in response to the success of Bluewater. Chris Phillips of Healey & Baker, the property agents, agreed that rents had started to ease, but added: "It's probably too early to tell what effect Bluewater will have."



Lakeside: quiet by comparison

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Put off by a bruised Reed



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

The long sought after new chief executive of Reed Elsevier was, apparently, on the brink of signing his contract when he changed his mind. And who can blame him? Any reasonable chap might have had second thoughts about entering a boardroom where the atmosphere had become quite so poisonous.

The tensions were not new but had been festering for years, and they were not of the creative kind. Since Pierre Vinken and Loek van Vollenhoven have now flounced out, they have conveniently cast themselves as the villains of the piece but boards that allowed such destructive nastiness to persist must assume some joint responsibility.

It seems that the two sides of this Anglo-Dutch venture never were as one. The complicated structure of the business undoubtedly made it harder for the obstacles to harmony and international understanding to be ejected but surely the non-executive directors must have reached the pitch when they felt some action had to be taken, even if it was only their own resignation? Shareholders do not expect people such as Sir Christopher Lewinton, the TI chairman, to sit passively by while a business is threatened by fighting factions.

Yet the directors of Reed seem to have been impotent in the face

of an elderly, but very determined Dutchman, Pierre Vinken was in his late sixties when he plunked himself in the way of the plans of the then chief executive, Peter Davis.

To hear the sighs of relief emanating from Reed yesterday, one might have thought that the board had successfully fought off some young Turk instead of finally waving off a septuagenarian. That there is still the little matter of a vacant chief executive's role to be settled was almost brushed aside amidst the welcoming of a new era at the company.

Investors will want the job filled before they can contemplate joining in the celebrations. In any other company, they might now be raising their hopes to the possibility of an opportunistic bidder pouncing while the vacuum at the top remains. But the corporate structure that has dogged the business for so long also provides a degree of protection against a bidder.

Clever investment bankers ought to be able to find a way of surmounting such obstacles. For Reed Elsevier's dismal share

price performance disguises a business which is full of potential for the new millennium.

The company is at the heart of the information age. It has been investing heavily in electronic publishing. If the new management structure which comes into play next week enables concentration on the business instead of international hostilities, there might even be an enticing job for a brave chief executive.

Bay watchers see an energy precedent set

Ever since announcing in the Energy White Paper that it would be taking a strict line on agreeing to new gas-fired power stations, the Government has been at pains to say that the curb does not amount to a moratorium.

Now we can see that it actually amounts to very little. The "strict" consensus policy is clearly being applied in such a loose fashion that a coach and horses could happily canter through it — especially if elections were following not far behind. Purely by coincidence, the decision yesterday not to block the 500-megawatt station at Baglan Bay comes just days before the Government has to go into purdah over anything that might influence the Welsh and Scottish assembly elections.

The power station is by far the largest that has skipped through a non-moratorium designed to create some sort of diversity, security and sustainability in the energy market. The station's environmentally friendly credentials — the main criterion by which the Department of Trade and Industry will entertain exceptions to the rule — are not clearly laid

out. The promise that an energy park will grow up around the station and deliver up to 6,000 jobs is vague, but it should sound good to Welsh voters.

The gas station will reduce the need for about one million tonnes of coal out of an already sharply declining market. Yet the Energy White Paper's main purpose had been to level the energy market amid a dash for gas and potential crisis in the coal industry. Some said at its publication — only last October — that the paper delivered only weak proposals to balance the market. The apparent moratorium on gas-fired power stations was its most powerful tool while we await a hugely complex and lengthy reformation of the electricity trading market. But if the moratorium was a mirage, the whole thing seems a waste of time.

It may be claimed that the Bag-

lan Bay proposal offers such economic benefits and promise of regeneration that it should be allowed to fly in the face of policy. But just wait for the queue of power companies outside Stephen Byers's door claiming the same attributes. This move has created a precedent.

When interest rates are immaterial

Dewthirst is what now passes for a British textile business: it makes men's shirts in Indonesia and children's clothes in Casablanca.

On the bright side, in Wales, it has what it claims is the most modern garment laundering plant in Europe, so while there is little hope for skilled machinists, there may still be hope for the washerwomen of Britain.

But Dewthirst closed six British factories last year as it took production off-shore and not even a half-point cut in interest rates today would stop this migration of manufacturing continuing. The company can only meet the de-

mands of its major customer, Marks & Spencer, by heading to the lands of cheap labour. The introduction of the minimum wage may have exacerbated the gap between the costs of having a blouse run up in Morocco or Manchester but it was already so big as to make the decision to move a no brainer.

The same reasoning will see manufacturing jobs in other sectors continue to flee. Yesterday, the Engineering Employers Federation conjured up a figure of 170,000 jobs which might vanish from the UK over the next couple of years. But despite timing the prediction in the hope of influencing the MPC, the EEF must know that the problem is beyond the reach of interest rates.

Green fingers

Philip Green is wasting little time in parcelling out Sears. The former owners repeatedly failed to sell the Freemans mail order business, succeeding only in presiding over its deterioration and shrinking worth. Mr Green had no doubt of Otto's keenness to take over the company and the price the company would pay coloured his own thinking in valuing Sears. He did not achieve the £395 million that Sir Bob Reid dreamed of but he was a happy man yesterday.

BICC's cable disposal attracts Wassall back

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

BICC yesterday announced the sale of the last of its troublesome cable businesses, immediately triggering a new takeover offer from Wassall, the industrial conglomerate.

Wassall, which already has 9.3 per cent of BICC, said last night that it was prepared to raise its offer for the company by 22 per cent, to 110p a share, but said that it would not make an official bid without the support of the BICC board.

The proposed offer values BICC at £463 million. However, Alan Jones, BICC's chief executive, rejected the revised proposal, saying that it still failed to recognise the company's value and prospects.

The announcements com-

bined to lift BICC shares 12p to 106p.

The sale of BICC's energy cables division for £275 million completes a restructuring programme that BICC hopes will restore some of its former glory. The deal takes the amount raised from the company's asset disposal programme to £386 million in the past six months and leaves Balfour Beatty, the engineering and construction group, as BICC's key profit-generator.

However, BICC gave warning that the latest sale would have a negative impact on earnings until administration costs were cut and the sale proceeds were reinvested.

Mr Jones said that, in the

meantime, funds from the disposal would be used to eliminate BICC's remaining debt of almost £200 million.

The warning prompted analysts to downgrade their 1999 pre-tax profit forecasts by about 10 per cent, to between £70 million and £72 million.

However, the stock market showed its faith in the long-term benefits of the restructuring plan, marking up BICC shares by 5p several hours before the Wassall announcement.

The process has underpinned steady recovery in BICC shares from a 12-month low of 38p in October. However, this compares with 180p last May and 449p five years

ago. Since then, profits from fibre and cables have been eroded by technological developments and oversupply, and the stock has lost its place in the FTSE 100 index.

Chris Miller, Wassall's chief executive, yesterday said: "We believe that without our interest, the BICC share price would fall substantially below its current level."

Michael Blagg, an analyst with Charterhouse Securities, said: "BICC's prospects are pretty good. There was no strategic reason to have cables and construction together, and this sale will make the group more coherent."

Tempus, page 30

Dewthirst downbeat on outlook

DEWTHIRST, one of Marks & Spencer's largest suppliers of clothing and toiletries, saw its profits hit last year and was downbeat about prospects for the current half (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The dramatic drop in consumer demand in the second half of the year and a cut in the group's operating margin from 8.5 per cent to 6.8 per cent meant that although sales rose from £363.6 million to £380.2 million, pre-tax profit in the year to January 15 fell from £31.4 million to £23 million.

The company was also hit by £2.2 million costs after the closure of six factories. On earnings per share of 13.29p (16.72p) the company is paying a final dividend of 4p, giving a total of 5.45p (5.4p).

Commentary, this page

Second bid for snooker group

By DOMINIC WALSH

CUES have been drawn in the murky world of snooker halls after Waterfall Holdings, the UK's second-biggest cue-sports group, launched a hostile £41 million bid for European Leisure, the market leader.

European, which is already the subject of an agreed takeover by Allied Leisure, the Burger King restaurants and ten-pin bowling operator, immediately rejected the all-paper offer and advised its shareholders to accept the Allied deal.

Waterfall, in which European has a 24 per cent stake, is offering 203.5 of its own shares for every 100 European shares.

At Waterfall's current price of 56½p, the offer values its target at 115p a share, compared with last night's 85p close. It is

also at a premium to Allied's offer, which, at its launch a month ago, was worth 99p a share, or £35.4 million.

However, European called into question the value of Waterfall's paper, claiming that there is a bid premium from its own shareholding in the company.

It also cast doubts on Waterfall's accounts, claiming that its profits had been inflated by exceptional items.

Martin Callan, Waterfall's chief executive, said that the bid, launched after the market closed last night, offered European shareholders a bigger slice of the cake, as they would emerge with 70 per cent of the combined group compared with just 52 per cent in the Allied deal.

A combined European/Waterfall would have 135 snooker and pool clubs and 60 discos and bars.

ICG gives warning on junk bonds

INTERMEDIATE Capital Group, the specialist finance house, gave warning yesterday that the use of junk bonds in unit trusts aimed at the retail market could short change consumers (Caroline Merrell writes).

ICG, a provider of mezzanine finance for small UK business, said it is raising the concern because the structure of bonds in the UK is different to the US where the market is much more advanced.

In the event of corporate collapse in the US, holders of junk bonds had some rights to assets that could be recovered. In the UK the same rules do not apply. ICG said it has taken up the matter with the fund managers concerned.

Tempus, page 30

VISITORS
TROPICAL HOUSE
ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

VISITORS
TROPICAL HOUSE
ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

Had a lovely time, Heidi Jenkins, Kent

This place is marvellous John & Paula Bridges USA

Very interesting
Air Conditioning Department, Wolfsburg Germany



Capitalism's two ambivalent faces



GRAHAM SEALJEANT

Barring the last-minute intervention of a good fairy, the Vaux brewery in the centre of Sunderland will close by July 2. A brewing tradition going back to 1837, maintained ever since by the Nicholson family heirs to Cuthbert Vaux, will end in chaos and the loss of 520 jobs.

Derek Foster, a prominent Sunderland-born Labour MP and Chris Mullin, one of the town's present Labour MPs, have both damned the closure as "the unacceptable face of capitalism". Understandably so. The axe will fall, in the end, because management buy-out proposals aimed at saving the brewery fell somewhere between £5 million and £20 million short of the benefits that the renamed Swallow Group reckons it can gain by selling its pubs, closing breweries and buying beer for its hotels and bars from the cheapest supplier.

The unacceptable face, though an overused phrase, still carries a wealth of meaning. It was first coined a generation ago by Sir Edward Heath, when as Prime Minister he was asked in Parliament

about the affairs of Lornho. The sin that inspired the Prime Minister's well-turned phrase was an early airing of boardroom excess. Lornho relied on the foreign responsibilities of key directors to pay them secretly in tax havens abroad and avoid punitive tax rates then levied in the UK.

The late Tiny Rowland, presiding genius of Lornho, had several unacceptable faces. On this occasion, capitalism and the voters eventually backed the buccaneer. After a board battle that dragged memorably through the courts and exposed a lot worse than dodgy boardroom pay, massed shareholders backed Mr Rowland. And today, neither Sir Edward nor even Messrs Foster and Mullin would support a return to 1970s tax rates.

Selling such a big chunk of manufacturing jobs for "a few pence on

the share price" as one critic put it, is still distasteful, even it seems to Swallow investors. The board under Sir Paul Nicholson, who had been managing director for 27 years and also chairman for 25, backed the buyout to save the brewery. But key institutional shareholders, such as Mercury and Hermes, put legitimate pressure on other directors to make sure that any deal produced the maximum value for shareholders.

The result is an ugly face of capitalism. But what is the unacceptable face? Is it the closure or the failures of judgment and corporate governance that led to so disorderly an end?

Two key factors underlay the Vaux drama. One is the gap that has developed on the stock market between international growth stocks and the smaller mature groups depending on the home

market. Vaux shares have lagged the FTSE 100 index by a mile over the past five years, attracting less than half the rating, in terms of price to profit, of the top 100. That has made them a lousy choice for fund managers such as Mercury and Phillips & Drew, who have chased value among solid domestic companies rather than going

for growth in multinationals. Such investors have inevitably become ever more demanding of changes to drum up "shareholder value".

The brewing industry has also been undergoing a painful revolution that few predicted correctly at the time of the brewing orders almost a decade ago. The pubs, once seen merely as the dead distribution monopoly of the brewery, became the focal point. Like hotels, they were properties that the City was happy to invest in. Deals proliferated. Nomura of Japan now owns a tenth of all UK pubs.

Breweries became unloved manufacturing plants. They now compete on price like any commodity supplier, unless they have managed to develop products that people want to buy for choice, rather than just finding them in the local dist outlet. Even beloved local brews can be produced by special-

ists. Vaux failed either to turn itself into a big growth stock or to adapt to the changing beer market. Sir Paul was not idle. He built a successful diversification into Swallow hotels, which now makes three quarters of group profit, but left the old-fashioned regional brewery with tied outlets as Vaux's cultural centre. It was also the symbol of the family tradition of public service and loyalty to all stakeholders.

Sadly, the family only owned 2 per cent, roughly one-fifth of the minimum stake needed to qualify as a family business. And shareholders did nothing to blend the twin duads of the board properly.

In 1995, a management study concluded that the future lay in Swallow hotels and that the Vaux business should go. The board, whose independent directors included a brother-in-law and former senior employee, rejected

it. This failure of corporate governance has served the people of Sunderland ill. Had the Nicholsons been obliged to see the writing on the wall, they could have split the business in two or driven the brewery in a different direction.

In the end, only the emergency of a takeover approach last summer forced Sir Paul to appoint an outside chief executive who demanded the obvious though perishing in the process. City fund managers, who hate privileged family dynasties with a passion that would have suited Robespierre, distrusted a last-minute buyout led by Sir Paul's brother Frank, who ran the brewery. Its fate was sealed.

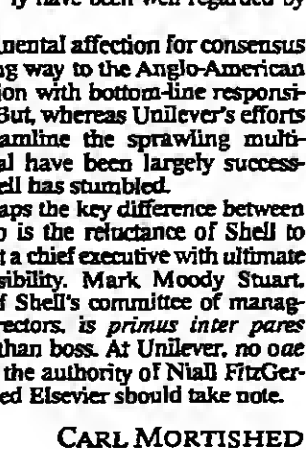
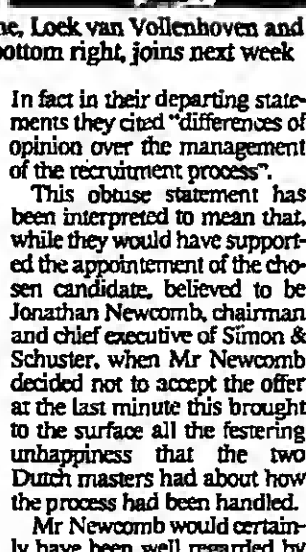
Had modern capitalism worked as in the textbook, the transition at Vaux should at least have been more civilised. That does not mean it would be comfortable. The caddy face is entrepreneurs having great ideas, expanding and creating jobs. The other, ugly but just as vital face of capitalism is market forces and efficient firms putting others out of business. It will always be so.

Reed Elsevier seeks to put its troubles firmly in the past

Latest board split highlights longrunning problems, says Raymond Snoddy



Publishing division: Reed Elsevier board members in 1994, from left, Nigel Stapleton, Ian Irvine, Loek van Vollenhoven and Pierre Vinken. Three have gone, along with Sir Peter Davis, top right. Morris Tabaksblat, bottom right, joins next week



Just when it seemed that things couldn't get any worse at Reed Elsevier, the international information and publishing group, the board is in turmoil and, most serious of all, the hunt for a new chief executive has stalled after a global search that has already lasted eight months. This comes on top of last year's scandal at Reed Travel Business, when the company had to make provisions of £200 million to compensate advertisers for inflated circulation claims for directories. The company has also been hit by the high cost of investing in the transition from paper to electronic publishing not to mention increasing competition in some of its key legal information markets in the US.

It was hardly surprising that the Reed International share price fell more than 4 per cent at one stage yesterday on news of the interrupted executive search. The surprise was that it did not fall even more sharply. Cynical analysts suggested yesterday that there was a floor for the share price based on the belief that if things got too bad the value could always be extracted by a takeover.

Some investors were even heard to mutter that if the un-

wildly Anglo-Dutch management structure continued to destroy value then it might be better to admit to an honest mistake and, after six years of Reed Elsevier, reverse the process and go for a demerger.

Perversely a number of senior figures close to the company were suggesting that Tuesday's special board meeting produced some rather good news. This follows the immediate resignations of Pierre Vinken, the 71-year-old former co-chairman, and Loek van Vollenhoven, who is 68. Though the resignations were largely symbolic — the two were due to retire at next week's annual meeting —

their departure is seen as not before time. Despite his undoubted brilliance, Mr Vinken, a brain surgeon turned publisher who more than anyone was responsible for creating the modern Elsevier, has been held responsible for much of the tension at the top levels of the united company in recent years. It is believed that it was Mr Vinken, supported by his close associate Mr Van Vollenhoven, who in 1995 moved against Sir Peter Davis, now chief executive of Prudential Corporation, because he thought the British executive was getting "too big for his boots". Sir Peter resigned with a massive payoff.

Then came a falling out with Ian Irvine, the former Reed Elsevier co-chairman and nominated successor to Sir Peter. From the outside these splits have been seen as a cultural clash between the British and Dutch ways of doing business. In truth, they are generational. "Pierre and Loek were increasingly out of touch with modern publishing and modern corporate governance. Pierre thought you just put up the cover price and took in the money," one executive said yesterday. The two resigning directors were not thought to be involved in the delays over the appointment of a new chief executive.

In fact in their departing statements they cited "differences of opinion over the management of the recruitment process".

This oblique statement has been interpreted to mean that, while they would have supported the appointment of the chosen candidate, believed to be Jonathan Newcomb, chairman and chief executive of Simon & Schuster, when Mr Newcomb decided not to accept the offer at the last minute this brought to the surface all the festering unhappiness that the two Dutch masters had about how the process had been handled.

Mr Newcomb would certainly have been well regarded by

the City. He was seen as potentially available after losing half his empire with the sale of S&S business and educational publishing interests to Pearson.

The search is now likely to be wound backwards to the shortlist in the hope that an announcement can be made before the summer. The share price is unlikely to recover until the uncertainty has been resolved. Nigel Stapleton, Reed Elsevier co-chairman, has agreed to stay on until a new chief executive is in place. He and fellow co-chairman Hermann Bruggink said they had asked not to be considered for the job — though they may not have been encouraged to apply either.

Apart from the inevitable delay in choosing a chief executive things actually are starting to look up for Reed Elsevier. "It's really about what is happening next week, not history," a director said yesterday. What happens next week, after Thursday's AGM, is that one of the world's top businessmen, Morris Tabaksblat, the retiring chairman of Unilever, takes over as chairman. Mr Tabaksblat will also finally take over a unitary board structure — something that was originally planned in the initial merger documents and later overturned under pressure from Vinken. In future there will be three boards — Reed, Elsevier and Reed Elsevier — but the six non-executives will be common to all and, as well as a single chairman and chief executive, there will be, in Mark Armour, a chief financial officer.

With the main businesses performing well despite all the disappointments, it may be seen in retrospect that the turnaround at Reed Elsevier began on Thursday April 15, 1999.

Aviation agreement must be on basis of reciprocity

From members of the British Cargo Airline Alliance

Sir, The message to Rodney Slater, the US Secretary for Transportation, after his recent UK visit must be clear: any form of new US-UK aviation agreement must be on a basis of reciprocity. If the UK Government is to grant traffic rights to US carriers, the US Government must be prepared to grant access to the US market.

This has been the stance of the UK Government since initial negotiations began on means of liberalising international aviation regulations. We must not now back away from the challenge of creating a level playing field for all operators. The onus lies with the UK Government to maintain their stance, and with the US

to seize the advantages offered by genuine competition.

Only through the resumption of negotiations can these issues progress and only through reciprocity can truly open skies be achieved.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTOPHER FOYLE

(British Cargo Airline Alliance)

MIKE SPARHAM

(British Airline Pilots' Association)

RICHARD BRANSON

(Virgin Atlantic)

HOWARD DAVIES

(British Air Transport Association)

KEN SMITH (Atr 700)

DANNY BERNSTEIN

(Monarch)

British Cargo Airline Alliance,

100 Rochester Row,

London, SW1P 1JP.

Conflicting lines on tax change

From Mr M. C. Fitzpatrick

Sir, You report ("IT experts fear Budget will spark brain drain", April 5) on the possible impact of the Budget changes to the use of so-called "personal service companies".

You explain that these changes will force highly paid freelancers (such as IT consultants) to become staff employees of the companies that they work for, instead of charging fees through tax-efficient personal service companies. You report that many IT consultants might emigrate rather than pay the extra tax. You further quote an Inland Revenue spokeswoman saying that the changes were intended to hit IT consultants, but to "stop companies

taking away the rights of workers by paying them freelance fees when they were effectively full-time employees".

It is interesting to compare this spokeswoman's statement with page 13, line 28, of the 1999 Budget Red Book, which suggests that the changes will yield £80 million for the Treasury in their first two years of operation alone.

Taking the spokeswoman's statement at face value, this particular Red Book figure is presumably a misprint. Yours faithfully,

M. C. FITZPATRICK

(Head of Economics,

Chantrey Vellach DFK),

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London, WC1B 5LF.

Letters to the Business section may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5112 or by e-mail to: business@the-times.co.uk. Letters should carry a daytime telephone number.

Anglo-Dutch tiffs have as long a history as successful business ventures between the two nations, the best examples of which are the Royal Dutch/Shell and Unilever groups. Both companies have dual parents, listed in Amsterdam and London with share prices that trade independently and both have an inner circle of executive managers that runs the group.

However, there is no love lost between the two sides from its inception in 1907. Shell was a product of the profound respect that stems from bitter rivalry. Marcus Samuel, the East End Jewish trader who founded Shell Transport & Trading was outfoxed by Henri

Bad blood that can flow across borders

Detharding, the ruthless Dutch accountant who led Royal Dutch Petroleum. Thus, Royal Dutch secured a majority 60 per cent share of the oil group, a structure that remains to this day.

Since the passing of the tyrannical Detharding, Shell has been run by a committee of managing directors, a consensus management system that

has come under enormous strain over the past five years as the company found its bureaucracy unwieldy and faction-ridden. Curiously, both Shell and Unilever reformed their management structures three years ago, both seeking to focus on product lines, thus reducing the influence of regional structures.

CARL MORTISHED

New play

YOU cannot keep a good man down. The entrepreneur behind Ionica, the mobile phone business that was one of the great corporate disasters of this decade, has quietly set up in business again.

Nigel Playford is operating out of a technology park next door to the old Ionica headquarters in Cambridge. He has set up Alberta Networks, described on its nascent website as "a telecoms consulting group specialising in wireless local loops".

This was what Ionica spe-

cialised in, of course, until last year when the receivers went in just 15 months after its stock market float. Playford is reckoned to have lost almost everything in that crash.

There is not much left of his creation except for the odd rusting base station in fields here and there and some unhappy investors who wish they had never heard of Ionica. I ring to offer Playford my best wishes, but for some reason he is not returning calls.

I AM approached by Peter Warner, who reckons to be the, well, the cat's whiskers at drawing logos featuring cats. He has read the story in yesterday's Times about the group of banks and other financial services providers that want one such logo to show which of the new individual savings accounts, or Isas, meet the necessary Treasury criteria.

Warner is keen to offer his services. He studied at the Royal Academy and then drifted into depictions of things feline after a career drawing children's books — he produced about 50, "and my overdraft went up with every one". He is already responsible for



the Whiskas cat and the one on boxes of Go-Cat, this having been based on his surviving moggie Django. I wish him luck and point him in the right direction.

Handy hints

CHARLES HANDY, the management guru, will address the annual Booksellers Association conference on Monday. This shows an uncommon degree of forgiveness, because last time Handy was invited to give his views, at the 1995 meeting, he was booted.

Handy is not a great fan of the business, thinking it aloof and slow to cope with change. Last time he upset delegates by telling them the end of the

Net Book Agreement would be a good thing. This time, according to an interview with *The Bookseller*, he will be singing the praises of on-line retailers such as Amazon.com, which should go down equally well. Publishers, he says, are "even worse" than booksellers. "They haven't a clue how to sell books other than through bookshops."

A RETIRED corporate solicitor has just completed a bust of Marie Curie to be installed at the Marie Curie Cancer Care head office in Belgrave Square at the end of this month.

Frederick Parkhouse was senior counsel for Shell for 24 years, a job whose long hours required him to abandon an earlier hobby as a sculptor. He took it up again on his retirement five years ago.

The Marie Curie request came through the encouragement of his wife, Josephine, who does work for the charity, and took three or four months to complete. I ring to congratulate Parkhouse, who turns out to be celebrating his 70th birthday yesterday.

Bank on it

GOOD news for Barclays staff, some of whom, I hear, are beginning to wonder just

what has happened to Michael O'Neill, the bank's new chief executive. He will definitely, no question of it, without fail, start on Monday — two weeks late.

The reason for his delay was that he had to tie some things up in the States — he hadn't finished his job there," says a Barclays source. But hang on, I thought he had flu? "Er, it's a mix of lots of different things really," Barclays backtracks.

So as the saying goes, women have colds and men have flu. And high-powered American bankers have things to tie up.

MARTIN WALLER

city.diary@the-times.co.uk



"Bet she couldn't find a chief executive for Reed Elsevier"

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[change] your mind?

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Internet offers fast route to car sales

Most people find buying a car or searching for a new house a time-consuming and frustrating experience. The two activities also generally involve dealing with people — ie, car salesmen and estate agents — who do not seem to know or care about how technology can speed up their businesses and make life easier for everyone involved.

Yet both car dealers and estate agents face a significant threat from the Internet, which is allowing a new breed of technology-savvy entrepreneurs to flourish. In the case of buying a car, the Internet is having the most profound effect where you would expect it least — in the second-hand and classic car markets. Using a service such as *autotrader.co.uk*, an offshoot of *Autotrader* magazine,

consumers can gather almost perfect information about the market for the kind of car they are searching for. *Autotrader.co.uk* will also soon face competition in the form of *Autobuy*, a US company that is launching a UK service at the end of this month.

Sites of this kind allow potential buyers simply to enter the make and model of car they want (say, a BMW 5 series), how much they are willing to pay, and whether they would like to buy from a dealer or a private seller. They then enter their postcode, and tell the site how far from home they are willing to travel to buy the car.

Within seconds, the potential buyer can view an exhaustive list (including photographs) of all the BMW 5 series cars for sale within a given distance



from home, including prices and detailed descriptions of each vehicle. This kind of information gives a car buyer an enormous advantage, and is, at the moment at least, completely free. If a buyer is aware of all the cars for sale in a local area, he or she is in a very strong bargaining position. By

going back to a site such as *autotrader.co.uk* every day, they can also see how long a car has been on the market. A few dealers are tackling this threat by putting up their own sites showing pictures of their cars and giving detailed descriptions of them. This will inevitably reassure buyers (after all, a garage can give details of other offers, such as warranties, etc), and is far more likely to entice someone into a showroom than a small advert on *Autotrader*'s Internet site.

The Internet is also changing the way properties for sale and rent are being offered, via sites such as *look.com* — an offshoot of *Look* magazine — which allow potential buyers to browse in the same way that car buyers can in *autotrader.co.uk*. Although

Loot's online layout is a bit confusing, it is relatively easy to browse through a sub-section (for example, houses for sale in northwest England), and then refine the search even further, for example, to look for three-bedroom houses for sale in the North West.

Loot also allows users to save a specific search and every time a new advert is placed with Loot that fits those search criteria it sends out an e-mail alerting the potential buyer.

□ Dell, the US computer manufacturer, has parted company with its advertising agency of 11 years, Moser O'Neill. The \$70 million (£43 million) contract will now be put "in review".

CHRIS AYRES

RAC's shortlist suggests sale of rescue service

BY ROBERT LEA

DRESDNER Kleinwort Benson has whittled down potential buyers of the RAC to a shortlist of six as insiders indicate that a sale of the motoring organisation is more likely than a flotation.

The RAC, led by Sir Michael Angus, the new chairman, is officially seeking in its "twin-track strategy" of having its adviser, DKB, and its broker, Cazenove, continuing to look at the options of whether to float or sell to a single buyer in order to get the best return for its 12,000 shareholders.

Insiders, however, are admitting that the recent sharp decline in the number of stock market floatations and the high-profile problems that surrounded the offer of William Hill, the bookmaker, indicate that a sale would not only be quicker but that it could also raise more cash.

The RAC's shareholders — the 12,000 members of the RAC gentlemen's club in London's Pall Mall from which the motoring organisation has now been split — are hoping for windfalls of about £35,000 apiece when the business eventually changes hands.

Conduct, the US group that owns Green Flag, had bid £450 million for the RAC, but

the takeover was blocked by the Department of Trade and Industry on competition grounds.

According to John Williams, of Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the investment bank adviser is drawing up a shortlist that will evenly balance potential trade buyers and financial buyers.

The would-be buyers include Ford, the US motor company, and Cliven, the City venture capitalist.

RAC yesterday revealed that the costs of its reorganisation



The RAC's Pall Mall base

sent the business into the red in 1998.

Pre-tax profits on normal activities rose by 45 per cent to £24.7 million on turnover — mostly subscriptions — which increased by 15 per cent to £310 million.

But the business was hit by a raft of exceptional items amounting to £35.2 million, leaving the RAC with a pre-tax loss of £10.5 million for the year.

More than half the costs — £18.5 million — relate to a one-off endowment to the Pall Mall club so that it can continue to act as a lobby organisation on motoring issues. However, about a further £9 million has to be spent on advisers dealing with the reorganisation.

The RAC said that it had also made a £2.1 million provision against former members of the Pall Mall club taking legal action to get a share of the members' windfall.

The organisation said that there had been a further £3.8 million of continuing integration and start-up costs respectively from its takeover of BSM and its joint venture with Trafficmaster. There were also £1.5 million of year 2000 computer costs.



Frank Walker, Guiton chairman, issued a costs warning

Guiton profits ahead

GUITION GROUP, the Channel Islands newspaper publisher that bought the *Guernsey Evening Press* at the end of last year to go alongside its *Jersey Evening Post*, said profits were up by 10 per cent last year. It gave warning, however,

that the costs of integrating the businesses would hit this year's profits. Pre-tax profits for 1998 came in at £43 million, and the company is raising the final dividend to 3.44p (3.13p) for a 10 per cent uplift in the total dividend to 5.64p.

Friendly Hotels books 52% rise

BY DOMINIC WALSH

SHARES in Friendly Hotels, the midmarket hotelier, continued their recent rise, gaining almost 10 per cent on the back of strong 1998 results and robust current trading.

A combination of acquisitions and organic growth pushed profits before tax and exceptional up 52 per cent to £7.4 million from turnover 28 per cent higher at £77.8 million. Headline earnings per share reached 16.4p (11.9p) and the final dividend of 4p makes a total of 6.3p (5.9p).

Friendly's shares, which hit a low of 93p in February, gained 15p on the day to 1.38p. Like-for-like sales in the UK were up 16 per cent, with revenue per available room rising 11 per cent. In the first quarter of 1999 the trend continued, with room occupancy up two percentage points to just over 59 per cent and the average room rate rising 11 per cent.

At the start of the year Friendly acquired the European master franchise for Choice Hotels International, giving it rights to such brands as Clarion, Comfort and Quality. It also paid Choice £16.1 million for 13 owned, leased and managed hotels, taking its total to 71, of which 44 are in the UK. It also has at least 300 franchises.

Tony Potter, chief executive and acting chairman, said that, in contrast to the Gulf War, the Yugoslavian crisis was having little impact on business.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Scottish software centre for US bank

JP MORGAN, the US investment bank, is to create 300 IT jobs in Scotland with the setting-up of a software applications development centre to design and develop systems to support the bank's European financial services operations. Although a location has yet to be found the bank wants to set up the operation — in which it is to invest £7.3 million — in the centre of Glasgow. JP Morgan will be hiring highly skilled software engineers, the bank said.

A spokesman for JP Morgan Europe said: "We have chosen to establish a technology centre of excellence in Scotland because it has a mature IT infrastructure and a rich supply of high-quality technology professionals." He added that the new centre will "combine the best of both investment banking and software house cultures". Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, said the decision to base the centre in Glasgow came after he met JP Morgan executives in New York. Another US investment bank, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, will today announce a new development at Cumbernauld, Strathclyde, creating 1,000 new jobs.

Midland's Malta deal

MIDLAND BANK, the HSBC Holdings subsidiary, plans to buy a 67 per cent stake in Mid-Med Bank, the biggest bank in Malta, from the Maltese Government. The bank had a net asset value of about \$183 million (£114 million) on September 30, and 60 offices and branches and 1,800 staff. HSBC shares leapt 102p to £22.05 yesterday. The sale is part of a strategy by the Maltese Government gradually to sell its interests in various industries. A Midland spokesman said that the bank would announce further details of the acquisition in a few weeks. Midland was the only bank interested in buying the stake in Mid-Med.

Citadel back in black

CITADEL HOLDINGS, the investor in French property that is quoted on the Alternative Investment Market, said that it made profits of £3 million in 1998 against a loss of £100,000 the previous year. Sten Mortstedt, chairman, said that the company would continue its strategy of acquiring modern, well-located properties in Paris and Lyon. The improvement in the French property market helped to raise the company's net asset value by 33 per cent to 142.1p. The dividend for the year rises to 3p from 0.5p. Citadel shares were unchanged yesterday at 95½p.

MoD prefers Cobham

COBHAM, the defence aerospace group, said yesterday that it had been named as the preferred bidder for the Ministry of Defence's electronic warfare training services contract. Cobham's FR Aviation currently operates the contract, which is due for renewal in May 2000. The company said that, although negotiations were continuing, if FR got the renewal it would be worth more than £200 million over the ten-year life of the deal.

Blockleys slips into red

BLOCKLEYS, the brickmaker that recently saw off a hostile bid from Natural Building Materials, slipped into the red last year after a downturn in sales. A 10 per cent decline near the end of the year saw 1998 turnover fall to £9.4 million (£10.3 million). The group recorded a trading loss of £102,000, but after interest payments and the £450,000 cost of defending the bid the loss was £1 million, against a pre-tax profit of £230,000 in 1997. The final dividend is cut to 0.15p, giving a total of 0.3p (0.45p).

Shearer gives lesson in strategy

When it comes to budgeting, copy England, says Robert Bittlestone

Three quarters of the way through the recent England v Poland football match viewers were surprised to see players huddled in conference while the game continued on the pitch beside them. Apparently they had stopped for a discussion about their objectives for the next game. "We always prepare a detailed plan," said Alan Shearer, "otherwise the players won't know what's expected of them when they play Bulgaria in June."

An unlikely scenario, but that is what happens in big corporations every year. Several months before year end, the ritual war dance called Annual Budgeting begins. Determining next year's objectives occupies about three months — one that is lost from the task of meeting this year's objectives.

In a December year end company the first activity is at the end of the summer when the budget briefing pack is issued. By September the first draft of the budget is required from subsidiaries. In October there is preliminary management comment and in November detailed submission and review, culminating in board approval. If the business has a matrix structure involving intermedial product groups or customer segments as well as geographical subsidiaries, there are additional layers of complexity.

Most of this time is spent in accessing data, creating budget spreadsheets and revising them

as required. Relatively little "quality" time is spent in thinking through the fundamental drivers of the business and debating ways in which new decisions could improve the bottom line. Little time is left also to incorporate new goals such as optimising shareholder value.

The process invites political manipulation for any executive whose bonus depends on meeting a negotiated target. It is so much less exhausting to reduce a target than to improve achievement: even Alan Shearer must dream of being able to shift the goalposts. Some of the hallowed techniques include: submitting a low forecast for the current year end and then beating it, while conveniently omitting to clarify that the budgeted 20 per cent growth for next year is now really only 12 per cent; creative accounting that releases profit from the balance sheet by manipulating provisions; and fatalistic masochism which yields under duress to a head office-imposed budget and then takes positive delight in saying "we told you so" when it is missed next year.

So how can we escape this corporate nightmare? Here are some practical alternatives being adopted by a growing number of large corporations:

The world does not stop at midnight on December 31. We should refuse to allow our common sense to be overruled by the proponents of financial eschatology. Instead, we should



Robert Bittlestone predicts a watershed in budgeting

establish a continuous forecast on a 12 or 24-month ahead rolling basis. The future cannot be predicted exactly, so we should explicitly incorporate a risk range of possible outcomes in forecasts, rather than a single set of goals.

Performance rewards should be based on beating historic performance and our competitors' achievement, not on budget negotiation skills. If we pay people based on growth against last year set against a benchmark of our competitors' results, then

the political aspects of budget-setting become irrelevant.

Interactive graphic models should be used to make explicit the linkage between cause and effect. We should use modern technology to help us to visualise immediately the effect on shareholder value of, say, a reduction in customer payment period from 60 to 40 days. Automation of these aspects cuts out weeks of "back office" data churning and involves the executive team in visualising the financial dynamics of their business as a whole. This focus on graphic rather than purely numeric techniques is deliberate.

These days our children have lavish state-of-the-art technology to simulate the exploits of a James Bond villain or a *Tomb Raider*. Imagine their reaction if they were invited to dispense with that visual imagery and peruse the outcome of their battle decisions as a series of numeric tables. Remarkably, when executives sit down to simulate battle for their companies, that is precisely what they are expected to do.

This is because the ground-work involved is organised by accountants, who no doubt have inherited genes that code for partiality to numeric presentation. However, behavioural studies make it clear that most line managers do not share the same genes and do not digest corporate information effectively via tabular presentations.

Senior managers have historically been uncomfortable with the personal use of technology, apart perhaps for e-mail. Even that still has its sceptics. But the approaching millennium is a cross-over year in this regard: newly appointed managers in their early thirties have been educated since the 1980s to use computers themselves. By 2005 this microprocessing meteorite will have eradicated the last of the dinosaurs and there will be no more excuses for dedicating a quarter of every year to the production of next year's budget. Evidently some companies don't intend to wait until then.

Robert Bittlestone is managing director of Metapragmatics Ltd.

Chinese walls must be built to last

THE one clincher that clients put forward when arguing against the further consolidation of accountancy firms is that of conflict of interest. With only a Big Five group of firms, companies find it an immensely complicated task to select an adviser — in even the simplest of cases — who is not "conflicted out".

When it comes to court work, such as that of expert witnesses, this was not quite so much of a problem. The half a dozen or so firms in the mid-tier were perfectly capable of providing help without much likelihood of problems.

But even they are now starting to consolidate, and the latest efforts to merge, by Robson Rhodes and Pannell Kerr Forster, have provoked a court action that is likely to provide the best guidance that professional firms throughout the City need on Chinese walls.

Whereas the case of KPMG and Prince Jefri Bolkiah, the brother of the Sultan of Brunei, last December dealt with the problems of an overlap of clients, the new case deals with the much more likely problem of professional firms falling over each other.

The Prince Jefri case provides a warning to firms. But it is one of greed. KPMG fell into the trap by behaving like characters from an old *Tom and Jerry* cartoon. As soon as the words Sultan of Brunei came up, their eyes started revolving like cash registers. They knew that there was bound to be a conflict. But all those fees... there had to be a way to get around the conflict.

But as the House of Lords finally ruled last December, there was not. Partly this was because of the sheer number of people within KPMG who had worked on the original Prince Jefri project. When it comes to 12 partners, 15 directors, 9 consultants, 43 managers and 18 assistant managers, and a small amount of more than £4 million in fees, it is going to be very difficult to ring-fence that lot when another project to investigate its workings comes into the office.

The lesson learnt in future will simply be that professional firms just don't take up such assignments.

But the Robson Rhodes case is different. Their partner, Frank Attwood, who had triumphed over Ernst & Young in the Merrett case, was asked by a group of Lloyd's names to act as an expert witness

against Pannell Kerr Forster on a similar case. He did so. The work started.

Then came the news that Robson intended merging with Pannells. Attwood said that they would have to resign the work. The syndicate took him and the firm to court and argued that this would be a breach of contract. The syndicate won. And the judge imposed a series of conditions laying down how confidentiality was to work, assuming the merger is voted through by partners.

One of the conditions is that neither of the partners involved can attend partners' meetings during the period of the action. As a result, neither Frank Attwood nor his fellow partner, Hosein Hamedani, can go to the partners' meeting which will vote on the merger.

But the process is aided by the fact that it involves a very small team of people. It is more manageable. And the process is also aided by the fact that the judge refined Lord Millett's judgment in the Prince Jefri case.

Lord Millett said then that "in my opinion, an effective Chinese wall needs to be an established part of the organisational structure of the firm, not created ad hoc and dependent on the acceptance of evidence sworn by the purpose by members of staff engaged on the relevant work".

But in the Robson Rhodes judgment, Mr Justice Laddie says: "The crucial question is will the barriers work? If they do, it does not matter whether they were created before the problem arose or are erected afterwards."

"It seems to me that all Lord Millett was saying was that Chinese walls which have become part of the fabric of the institution are more likely to work than those artificially put in place to meet a one-off problem."

So what now appears to be acceptable is that Attwood and his team have to work in a separate building, not take part in partnership affairs and have all their documentation removed and held at the firm's solicitors.

In short, the Chinese walls should be effective and rigorous and be seen by the outside world to be serious. Professional firms should, in short, behave professionally. There is nothing new in that sentiment. But professional firms, be they lawyers, accountants or whoever, would do themselves several favours by sticking to that simple adage.



ROBERT BRUCE

More pressing concerns

IT WAS, of course, the power of the press. This week the effort by Arthur Andersen to poach the KPMG practice in Canada was aborted amid a welter of recriminations. But those in the know suggest that one of the reasons is that press barons like to keep their own company. Rupert Murdoch is chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times* and News Corp is audited by Arthur Andersen.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Conrad Black, whose Hollinger company owns *The Daily Telegraph* among other publications, has KPMG Canada as auditors. It is thought that he preferred to stick to the idea that never the twain should meet.

Party on

AT LEAST Robson Rhodes partner Frank Attwood will be able to go to the odd Christmas party this year. Having been barred from partners' meetings as a result of being an expert witness in a case in which a Lloyd's syndicate is suing Robson's new merger partner, Pannell Kerr Forster, the Chinese walls do not go as far as that. He will still be allowed a social life. The judgment that defines the relevant restrictions considered the hypothetical idea of preventing Attwood "meeting at a Christmas party another partner of Robson Rhodes who, for part of his

time, happens to work with an ex-Pannell Kerr Forster partner who is, or was, connected in some way with the Syndicate Litigation". Fortunately for Attwood, Mr Justice Laddie decided that in his view "that goes far beyond preventing leakage of information and extends into the realm of the fanciful and theatrical".

Antidimax

WHEN Gordon Brown be-

came Chancellor of the Exchequer we heard much in favour of the idea of a general anti-avoidance rule, a GAAR, to curb the antisocial behaviour of tax advisers who preferred to help taxpayers to keep their money rather than giving too much of it to the Treasury.

Now the impracticalities of such a rule have sunk in, there has been much less rattling of Treasury sabres. But tax insiders are looking out for the Chancellor's holiday plans. Portugal has just introduced a GAAR.

ROBERT BRUCE

حكمة من الامم



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MUSIC

Neville Marriner at 75

هكذا من الأصل

ARTS

CLASSICAL CDS

Brendel's Beethoven

Forty years in fields of glory

MUSIC: Richard Morrison meets Sir Neville Marriner, as he prepares to conduct his 75th birthday gala

If ever a pocket cartoon summed up a man's achievement, it was the celebrated one carried in *The New Yorker* a few years ago. It showed a parrot listening to the radio. Out of the airwaves came the announcer's voice: "That was the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields..." Quick as a flash, the parrot chirped in: "...conducted by Sir Neville Marriner."

There was indeed a time when this majestic combo seemed intent on recording everything and touring everywhere. Ask Marriner how many pieces he has recorded and he answers, with delightful nonchalance: "Oh, someone totted them up once, but they lost count after 1,600."

Today, with the record industry much shrunken, the Academy's dominance is less marked — but it remains the most famous chamber orchestra in the world. Time, then, to celebrate Marriner's achievement, for next week a Festival Hall concert marks not only his own 75th birthday but also the 40th anniversary of the auspicious moment when he founded the ensemble that transformed orchestral standards for ever.

The London music scene of the 1950s was very different from today's: less disciplined, more ebullient. For a while Marriner, an LSO violinist,arked about with the best of them. "I used to travel to concerts with a violinist called Peter Gibbs, who had been an RAF pilot and owned a Tiger Moth," he recalls. "One day we took a lot of flour-bags up with us and bombed the LSO bus on the road from Brussels to Ostend. I don't think I could plavate players like that in my orchestra now."

But something in Marriner rebelled against this easy-going scene. The concept of the academy began innocuously enough. "We didn't take it seriously at first," he says. "We used to gather in my flat to play chamber music for fun. Then our keyboard player, Jack Churchill, who was music director at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, suggested that we give a concert there after a service. He said stragglers were always hanging around, hoping to keep warm."

"Well, we discussed names in the pub. We weren't big enough to be called an orchestra, and we hated the word 'ensemble'. Then the vicar said: 'You know that around the Strand in the 18th century there were clubs called academies, for people with similar interests in the arts or sciences?' We said: 'Fine, we'll call ourselves the Academy.' Then he said: 'Don't forget the church...' So we came up with this ridiculous name."



Sir Neville Marriner: "The most important test of a future Academy player is to take them on tour and see if you can bear to spend time with them"

Ridiculous or not, it was instantly successful. The boss of the newly founded L'Oiseau Lyre record label came to that first concert and signed up the Academy on the spot. "We immediately recorded all those Italian ice-cream merchants: Manfredini, Corelli, and so on," Marriner recalls. "So in

"Sometimes you turn on the radio and hope it isn't yours. That happens to many musicians. I remember Alfred Brendel recalling how he was listening to a piano recital on the radio, and making a mental note of everything he didn't like about it, when the announcer said that the pianist was Alfred Brendel."

"Like Solti I think I will keep on going until I'm stopped"

Marriner's way of selecting players for the Academy has remained constant. First comes an audition. "You can tell within five minutes what they can do." Then they are put into the Academy for a concert or two to see how quickly they absorb its immaculate late ensemble style. "But the most important test," Marriner says, "is to take them on tour and see if you can bear to spend time with them. If they are miserable devils, they don't get invited back."

About two applicants in a hundred get through, and the turnover is high. "The average age of players in this 40-year-old orchestra is about 30," Marriner notes. "We find that the women have babies and then can't tour, while the men sooner or later need more security than we can offer, and join one of the salaried orchestras." Marriner takes little trouble

to conceal his disdain for the latter. "I get so mad with contract orchestras. Invariably, two people are missing from any rehearsal because they are at the dentist — usually a viola and double bass." The most pampered orchestras, he says, are in America. "The union rules there are so restrictive that orchestras virtually price themselves out of recordings. In Munich, the conductor can call a 12-hour rehearsal with two half-hour breaks, if he wants. In America a rehearsal is two-and-a-half hours maximum, with at least 20 minutes off, and they will stop in mid-bar if you overrun."

Similarly, Marriner has a strong aversion to government subsidy. The Academy has always been unsubsidised. "If the Arts Council give you money, they also tell you how to spend it. We didn't want other people's fingers poking into our artistic pie. Of course, the result is that the orchestra is always on a knife-edge, financially." That's why the Academy can be heard regularly in Germany (where ticket prices are much higher) yet has no London season. "We once sold out the Festival Hall and still lost £32,000 in a single night," Marriner says.

He talks of loosening ties with the Academy, having "decided two or three years ago that I wasn't immortal". And he revels in his new rural life in Devon. "I find that, when

I'm filling in the diary for 2004, my wife has already booked weeks that are important for work in the garden."

But what of his work with orchestras round the world? "Like Solti, I will probably go on until I'm stopped," he says wryly. "The awful thing about a conductor becoming geriatric is that you seem to become more desirable, not less. I just wish all these offers had come in when I was 30."

Times readers can purchase two tickets for the price of one on the top three ticket prices (£30, £24, £18) for Sir Neville Marriner's 75th Birthday Gala Concert, performed by the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields at the Festival Hall next Wednesday at 7.30pm. To book, call Times Live on 0870-842 2212. Lines are open 24 hours a day. The programme is Mozart, Britten and Mendelssohn.

NEW CLASSICAL CDS: Brahms with bite; young Mozart; Brendel shines

CHAMBER

BRAHMS
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MORE live recordings from the Mozartsaal in Vienna's Konzerthaus; and, as ever, there is little doubt about who is playing. From the finely drawn, ardent opening string notes of Brahms's Clarinet Quintet, before the soloist rises, lark-like, this is the distinctive sound of the Alban Berg Quartet. And, with Sabine Meyer's feisty clarinet, this is about the most high-fibre performance in the catalogue.

As the opening movement gets under way, the string ensemble can be gritty, acerbic even. And the slow movement, in this exceptionally close, intimate recording, reveals a fiercely intense partnership between soloist and quartet. Haridolf Schlichog, who was the fine viola player of the Cherubini Quartet, throws himself into the fray as the extra player for the Quintet in G, an imaginative and less predictable coupling of repertoire than the often inevitable Mozart Clarinet Quintet. As expected, the Berg Quartet meet the cross-accents of the opening head-on and, with Schlichog contributing to its rich fabric, stomp splendidly through the Hungarian finale.

HILARY FINCH

OPERA

MOZART
Mitridate
Dessay/Bartoli/Asawa/
Sabbatini/Les Talents
Lyriques/Rousset
Decca 460 772-2
(3 CDs) ★ ★ ★ £38.99
THE final quintet of defiance against Roman tyranny, which runs for just under a minute, is one of the few pieces of concise composition in *Mitridate*. The 14-year-old Mozart's excursion into opera *seria* takes its time in telling the story of two brothers, Sifare

and Farnace, rivals for the hand of Aspasie on opposing sides in the Graeco-Roman wars. Even the most fervent Mozartian is likely to admit that there are tedious patches. *Mitridate* is rarely staged and even more rarely recorded.

But Decca has taken the plunge and cast the piece most generously. Natalie Dessay is in top form as Aspasie, surrounded by lies, treachery and even a possible marriage with King Mitridate himself. To her go the big emotional outbursts and Dessay dispatches them with almost greedy brilliance.

Decca cast a mezzo (Cecilia Bartoli) and a counter-tenor (Brian Asawa) as the warring brothers. Bartoli is the great stylist, but Asawa is by no means outclassed. Sabbatini makes much of Mitridate's death scene and Rousset is a highly sympathetic conductor.

JOHN HIGGINS

ORCHESTRAL

BEETHOVEN
Piano Concertos Nos 1-5
Brendel/MPD/Rattle
Philips 463 781-2 (3 CDs)
★ ★ ★ £38.99

THESE recordings of the Beethoven piano concertos are sophisticated, discerning and tasteful, with nothing exaggerated, so it all sounds exactly as it should. But listen more closely and you realise the subtleties of inflection in No 3, the barely perceptible tempo modifications in No 4 and the unforgotten authority of the *Emperor*. Add to that the sparkling wit of the rondo finales to Nos 1 and 2 and Alfred Brendel's superbly meticulous pianism and you have a set to treasure.

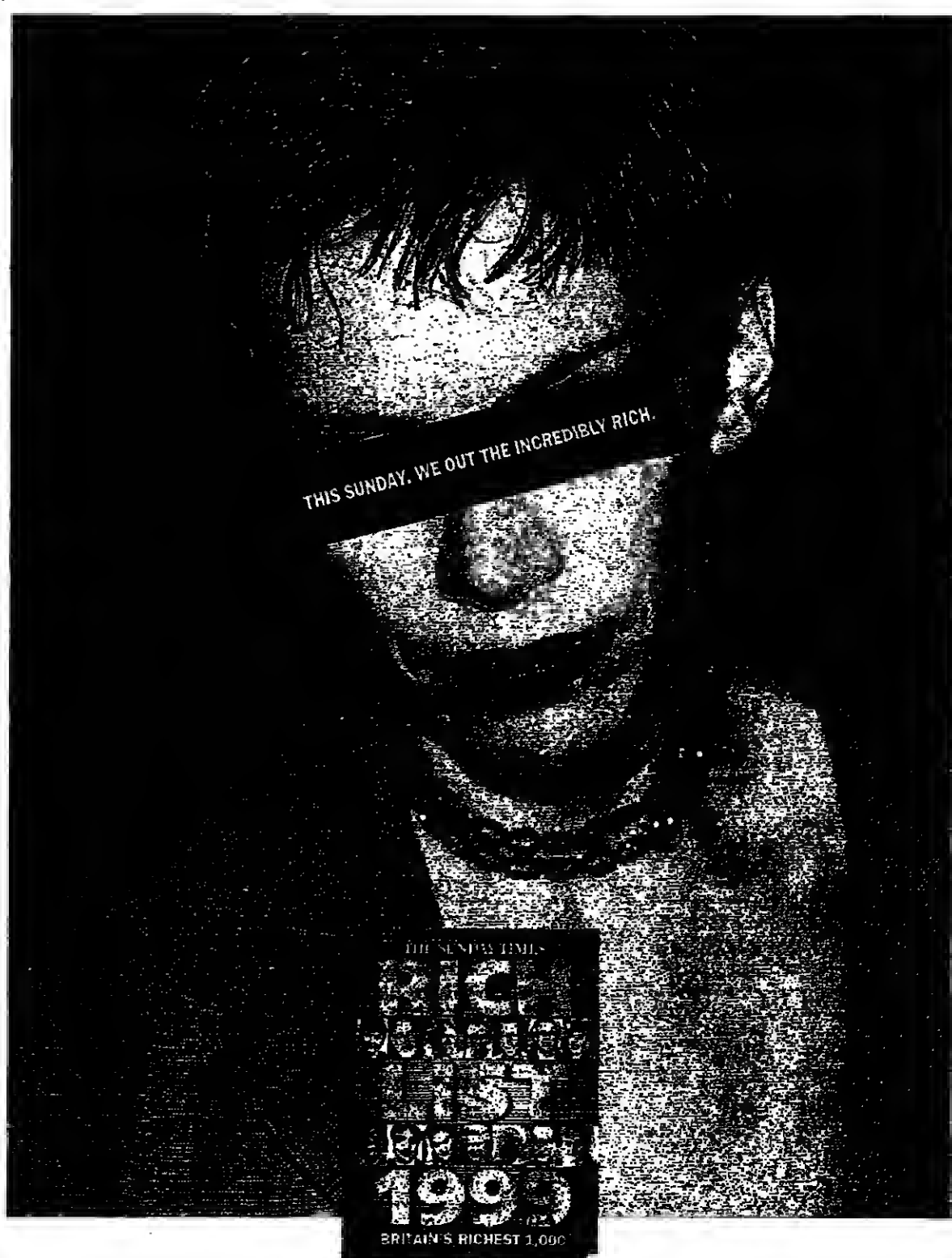
Such joy radiates from the partnership with Simon Rattle and the Vienna Philharmonic, and such seamless give and take from two distinctive but eminently compatible musical personalities, that it is easy to see why Brendel should be content for this fourth go round to be, as he says it will, his last.

BARRY MILLINGTON

★ Worth hearing
★ ★ Worth considering
★ ★ ★ Worth buying

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THE SUNDAY TIMES



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Semele

Hardel



Bach to nature

It has never been cooler to be a counter-tenor, never more remunerative to be a mezzo. But when did you last hear a really great contralto? The answer may well be the last time you played a CD by Nathalie Stutzmann, for the French contralto visits England all too seldom, and hers is a truly rare voice.

Her repertoire stretches over at least 400 years of music, but her voice and spirit are never more exquisitely tuned than in the Baroque era. Here, her early training as a bassoon player tells in every sinuously inflected line, every perfectly judged breath. And when the composer is Bach, and instrumental and vocal lines intertwine, then the symbiotic relationship is unusually compelling.

Imagine, then, the "contented rest" of Bach's cantata *Vergnügte Ruh* breathed out in the voices of oboe d'amore (Anthony Robson), violin (Catherine Mackintosh, leading the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) and Stutzmann herself. Only the following contemplation of the world as a "house of sin" could have broken the spell; and here Stutzmann's sharp-etched rhythms tightened the tension before it was released once again in the sighs shared with violins and violas as the "wayward heart" wandered, lost

CONCERT

OAE/Stutzmann
Barbican

without the ballast of its continuo bass.

Susan Sheppard's eloquent cello came into its own, though, underlining Stutzmann's ardent goodnight to the world in the cantata *Ich habe genug*. Stutzmann's contralto traced and paraphrased the valedictory *Song of Simeon* with rare sensitivity, graphically using vowels to lift the melodic line, and consonants to propel it. It was a moving tribute to the late Francis Baines, double-bass player with the OAE, who was commemorated in this concert.

Robson took up a reedy oboe da caccia here, after what seemed an exhausting performance with Mackintosh of Bach's Concerto in C minor for Oboe and Violin. This was a brisk, no-nonsense performance of a work which deserves a little more space. But the Corelli Concerto Grosso Op 6 No 1, which began the evening, lived dangerously without compromising the music, and revealed the OAE's strings at their best.

HILARY FINCH

BOOKS

American in Paris, and London, and...

Since the beginning of time there have been about half a billion Americans. On the date of Independence in 1776, there were roughly two million people living in the East Coast colonies and the vast uncharted territories beyond. Today there are approximately 270 million, and we will know the exact number shortly after the official census that takes place next year (a decennial nose count is mandated by the US Constitution).

From this historical pool of humanity, the creators of the *American National Biography* have selected 17,500 individuals. Each subject receives a write-up of between 750 and 7,500 words, and the profiles are spread over 24 hefty volumes. The principal criterion — a helpful one — is that the candidate must have expired before 1990. Citizenship is not a prerequisite, but "significant influence" is expected, so some names appear which are customarily associated with other lands. W. H. Auden has an entry (though he did become an American citizen after the war) and so does Peter Sellers, who never thought of changing citizenship. For a nation which is made up of immigrants, transients and a free-flowing population, citizenship would be an unworkable restriction.

Not since putting a man on the Moon has an American organisation undertaken such an ambitious logistical project.

RAYMOND SEITZ

AMERICAN NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY (24 vols.)
Eds. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes
OUP, £1500
ISBN 0 19 520635 5

The inspirational authority for the task was the American Council of Learned Societies, an umbrella confederation of academic associations founded in 1919. There are 61 member groups running the gamut from the African Studies Association to the Sonneck Society for American Music. The ACLS published the country's first biographic dictionary in the 1930s, and although annual supplements followed, the content and tone of the earlier compendium were considered, by the end of the century, woefully out of date.

From its position at the apex of America's intelligentsia, the ACLS was able to exploit the academic network of the United States. Under the direction of managing editor Paul Betz, some 200 senior and associate editors divided into 19 categorical task forces. These committees selected the subjects, commissioned the essays from 6,100 contributors and completed the final review. They were supported by ranks of

copy editors and fact-checkers at the Oxford University Press in North Carolina. Money came from the ACLS's own fund-raising as well as grants from the Mellon and Rockefeller Foundations and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The new *Biography*, according to Stanley Katz, the President Emeritus of the ACLS, is the product of the "often invoked, but rarely manifest, scholarly community".

In an era of sometimes cacophonous political correctness, the editors have made a judicious effort to redress the balance between white males, who dominated the earlier biographic dictionary, and women and minorities, who were frequently neglected. Sacagawea, who barely rated a mention before, is here given full treatment, not only for her exploits as guide on the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Northwest Territories, but for her own life as well (we learn, for example, that she married a Shoshone with the unfortunate name of "Jerk Meat").

Oscar Charleston, the outstanding black baseball star of the prewar Negro League, is given long overdue recognition. So, too, Martha Ballard whose ordinary life as an 18th-century midwife would have faded into oblivion had it not been for her valuable diaries. More questionable, perhaps, is the inclusion of Benjamin Franklin's common law wife, Deborah, except that she

signed her letters to her travelling husband with the words, "Your a feck shonet wife".

These volumes are an absorbing panorama of the long, colourful American parade. As expensive reference works they naturally belong in schools and libraries, and the succinct bibliographies that appear at the end of each entry are a scholar's feast. In a way, this is a pity, because the essays are well written and often entertaining, and the *Biography* would be perfectly suitable for the bedside table were it not for the weight. The pages are strewn with little nuggets.

Take, for example, the profile of George Jessel (1898-1961), the vaudeville comic who turned down the lead role in *The Jazz Singer*. In the same year as the movie appeared (1927), Jessel made a different contribution to life and art. Having mixed a mid-morning tomato drink for himself in a Palm Beach bar, he offered a taste to a Philadelphia socialite named Mary Brown Warburton, who promptly spilled it down the front of her white gown, thereby christening herself and the drink "Bloody Mary".

American National Biography represents such a colossal effort that it probably never would have taken flight without the psychological imperative of the looming millennium. But its publication now is indeed something to celebrate.



Manhattan transfer: W. H. Auden emigrated to New York in 1939 and became an American citizen in 1946

A light shone on family history

Andrew O'Hagan on the family that built Scotland's lighthouses

Victorian fathers cast long shadows. There was something eminently paternal in the solitary son, piddling away the hours in the midst of dreams and fevers.

This was also true for Robert Stevenson, a brilliant writer and a creature of strong fathers, who — to the morning of his death — allowed those fathers to blink in and out of his life. "The atmosphere of his father's sterling industry," wrote Stevenson in his unfinished novel *Weir of Hermiston*, "was the best of Archie's education. Assuredly it did not attract him; assuredly it rather repelled and depressed. Yet it was still present, unobserved like the ticking of a clock, an arid ideal, a tasteless stimulant in the boy's life."

However arid the ideals of Stevenson's father — and there was always something of the family in his dry cough — the truth must be that their interests were not remote from his character as a writer. Their hard work as engineers, their mastery of weather, mathematics and the high sea, find a strange relative in the sentences of Robert Louis Stevenson, their landlubbing son and grandson and nephew and cousin. In this book, Bella Bathurst has found a way to al-

low the Stevensons to stand for themselves and yet she also allows for the possibility that we might read, in the story of the fathers, a crucial story of the storytelling son.

Bathurst has a natural gift for narrative. She has a not-Stevenson-like attentiveness: she catches as much with the ear as the eye. And so we enter into a bold and tender story. Louis's grandfather Robert Stevenson, "a slave to self-improvement," built the Bell Rock lighthouse, off the coast of Arbroath, in 1807. It was a massive undertaking: to build a light on a dangerous crag, using thousands of tons of stone, in the worst of weather and with no great public enthusiasm for the job.

Robert Stevenson is half Abraham, half King Canute; he has a God-fearing resilience as he squares up to the fury of God's elements. He seems to have been a man who was almost overcome with a sense of public duty, and overcome too with a sense of the symbolic value of lighthouses. Bathurst is not the type to be blinded by romance, however. "The fact that he was to be proved right," she says, "makes him admirable. It does not always make him likeable."

You detect more sympathy for Robert's son, Alan, who took up a secret pen and made

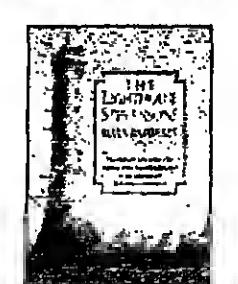
application fails; where the heart gives out.

Louis's father, Thomas — Alan's brother — was never workshy either. Yet he, too, had a secret hankering to be a writer. He crumbled in the face of his father's objections — as his own son would not — and lost himself in note-taking on the subject of waves and "heavenly writers". There is an anxiety of influence detectable in each of these men: each if them wanted to live up to his father and yet find a way to live as himself. Robert Louis Stevenson broke excruciating waves of disappointment over his father's head: he turned his back on lighthouses, but in the squalid, he seems to have found his writer's voice.

Bella Bathurst has built a lamp herself: it illuminates the work of a literary hero, a family business, a habit of mind and a Scottish period. She gives us a sense of the lives of the keepers and provides a eulogy for a kind of life now going or gone: all the lighthouses, including the ones built by her Stevensons are now unmanned.

Bella Bathurst is what people used to call the genuine article: from the summit of this terrific first book she looks to become one of the best biographers of her generation. In the meantime, you might do yourself a favour and fold *The Lighthouse Stevensons* into your knapsack.

THE LIGHTHOUSE STEVENSONS
By Bella Bathurst
HarperCollins, £15.99
ISBN 0 00 257006 B



a friend of Wordsworth, but who toed the line quite spectacularly, by building the lighthouse at Skerryvore. The light stood 138 ft above the first course of stonework: a magisterial construction which threw its light over some of the most treacherous sea imaginable.

Bathurst has qualities of restraint and is Scottishly parsed in the face of the facts: she cleaves ever to the sunnier side of detail and only seldom to emotion. But she has what the best biographers always have — a certain love for her subject. There's an attractive duality at the centre of her affections: she adores the industry of these Stevensons, yet she is mindful of the places where

Hit by a bolt from the blue

A strange force is randomly reconstructing the minds of ordinary folk in Studies San Francisco, in the heyday of the hippy drug-culture. When a flash of cosmic blue light strikes men and women (and even roaming animals) it quickens their DNA, sharpening their faculties and magnifying their physical powers so that they become a superhuman race of the future — "the Blues". Driven into violent action by their heightened awareness, each Blue becomes bent obsessively on realising his or her deepest yearnings: great sex, harmony with nature, abiding compassionate love, or (occasionally) brutal psychotic violence.

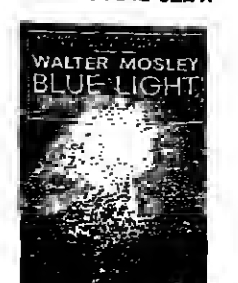
One of their number takes on the role of leader, galvanising the Blues into a cult, inventing rituals of mixing and drinking each other's blood to enhance their mystical powers. The woman he was coupled with at the moment the blue light struck becomes the

cult's sex goddess, the child conceived in that instant grows to amazonic strength and wrestles bears in the wilderness. But among them stalks Grey Man — a zombie created when the blue light struck a man dying of cancer. At the moment of his death, Grey Man's quest is the destruction of all other Blues, a task he pursues with grizzly determination, dismembering and mutilating Blues and friends of Blues as he tracks them down.

The narrator of this tale is not a Blue, but Chance, a mixed race, graduate student, caught up in the Blue world. After abandoning his research on Thucydides, Chance bears witness to the extinguished hopes of the Blues. If we are to believe his tale, it is he who helps finally to annihilate Grey Man and who rescues a Blue remnant to see another day.

Walter Mosley's earlier mysteries, with their quirky black hero-narrator Easy

LISA JARDINE
BLUE LIGHT
By Walter Mosley
Serpent's Tail, £9.99
ISBN 1 85242 611 X



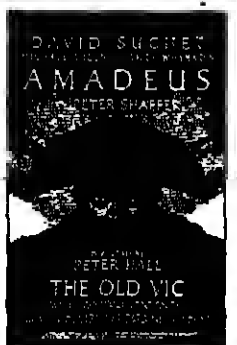
Rawlins, have something of a cult following. He specialises in getting inside the minds and lives of North American itinerant blacks and white trash — living lonely, confused lives in a penumbra world of pain and disappointment on the fringes of affluent society. He writes compelling,

gritty, real-life dialogue and crafts his plots around closely observed detail of life as a social outsider.

Blue Light is a new venture, into "science fiction". In fact, "science" has very little to do with this fiction, unless we mean the chemistry which produces the substances fettered of drug-users. In *Blue Light*, Mosley details meticulously the grainy, disorientated insanity of being high of something-or-other in San Francisco during the Vietnam War years. He describes with mesmerising clarity the hallucinatory twilight world of nightmares and euphoria inhabited by losers and drifters who move from one fix to another. The blood-exchanges, lozings and brutalities merge into a single inchoate dreamworld. We cannot even be sure that the entire "History" is not a product of Chance's deluded mind, since at the end of the book he is confined to a state mental hospital, registered as a paranoid schizophrenic.

EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER THE TIMES

2 FOR 1 TICKETS AT SIX TOP SHOWS



This week *The Times* offers readers the chance to buy two tickets for the price of one for some of the best shows in London.



SHAKESPEARE IN LAUGHS:
Routinely funny romp through 37 plays

Amadeus, Old Vic, SE1. Peter Shaffer's wickedly funny play currently starring David Suchet. Offer valid from April 12-May 31 Monday-Thursday evenings at 7.30pm and matinees on Wednesday and Saturday at 2.30pm (at 3pm from April 19). Tickets normally £32.50 each.

Blood Brothers, Phoenix Theatre, WC2. Winner of the Olivier Best Musical production award. Offer valid from April 12-June 30 Monday-Friday evenings at 7.45pm and matinees on Thursday at 3pm and Saturday 4pm. Tickets normally £32.50 each.

An Inspector Calls, Garrick Theatre, WC2. Winner of 19 awards, the National Theatre production of J.B. Priestley's thriller stars William Gaunt. Offer valid Monday-Thursday evenings at 7.45pm from April 12-May 15. Tickets normally £29.50 each.

The Woman in Black, Fortune Theatre, WC2. Susan Hill's frightening ghost story, now in its tenth year. Offer valid Monday-Thursday evenings at 8pm from May 1-June 30. Tickets normally £23.50 each.

Buddy, Strand Theatre, WC2. Rock'n'roll musical of The Buddy Holly Story. Offer valid Tuesday-Thursday evenings at 8pm, Friday evenings at 8.30pm and Sunday matinees at 4pm from April 12-May 31. Tickets normally £27 each (Tues-Thurs and Sun mats) and £30 each Friday evenings.

The Reduced Shakespeare Company, Criterion Theatre, W1. The longest-running comedy in the West End includes all 37 of the Bard's plays. Offer valid for Tuesday-Friday evenings at 8pm and matinees on Thursday at 3pm, Saturday at 5pm and Sunday at 4pm from April 12-June 30. Tickets normally £25 each.

There is a £2 transaction fee per booking.

THE TIMES
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CHANGING TIMES

حكاية من الماضي

BOOKS

هكذا من الأصل

Washed ashore in a bomb-damaged land

The scarring runs deeper than the flattened landscape in Philip Casey's novel, set in postwar London

The water star is a reflection: imperfect, but beautiful in itself. Its dark, shimmering image shivers in a breath of wind, or is obscured by the observer's shadow in the moon, but that mutability, that elusiveness, is part of its arresting mystery. Lean down too close to the pool and it will appear to vanish altogether.

Philip Casey's second novel, *The Water Star*, works in the same way. Casey is a poet and a playwright; he has a poet's delicate ear and a playwright's eye for detail. The tale that unfolds in its thick, satisfying volume is not particularly complex — any more

as the circumstances of any of our lives are complex, which is to say infinitely and infinitesimally so. London, 1950: the city is a bomb site, a building site, and there is plenty of work for Brendan and Hugh Kinsella, natives of Co. Wick. Brendan's wife and Hugh's mother

Irish mountain that haunts them in their grey London days. Croghan Kinsella.

The city separates them. Each longs for home, for the past, finds himself strange even when not among strangers. The London of Hugh's imagination is nowhere to be found: "When he was a child, he had always thought that London had no hills. He remembered this as he walked up the incline of Tollington Park, past the large Protestant church and into Everleigh Street, where the Irish faithful were congregating. Hugh was perversely proud that his church had a corrugated iron roof, in contrast to its grand Protestant neighbour. No matter that Catholic churches in Ireland were of good stone and slate, the poverty of this one made him feel a cut above the Protestants, morally speaking."

But when Hugh's longing manifests itself in a vision of his dead mother, Brendan hides his own sense of loss in a fear of his son's

madness, and Hugh goes his own way.

He finds a home with Elizabeth Frampton, who takes him into her house and her bed. She has another lodger, Karl, a German, whose family was killed in Hamburg in the war. He manages his bereavement by carving their effigies as he sits in the garden — and by loving Elizabeth. When she takes to Hugh he is faced with another loss. Brendan, meanwhile, finds comfort after his son's disappearance with Sarah, an Irish woman sent away from home when she became pregnant with her daughter Deirdre. Through the interweaving and the overlapping of these relationships, Casey examines how human nature is shaped by sorrow; how people will find a way — sometimes, it seems, despite themselves — to take comfort from others, to make homes where they can, even among the ruins.

Casey's technique, too, is one of interweaving and overlapping. He



will tell the same story more than once, each time from a different vantage point: Hugh's own experience of his arrival at Elizabeth's house and then Karl's vision of the events. Of course, it is not the "same story" that's told, which is precisely the point. As an idea in the abstract this might seem laboured; in the novel, however, it works seamlessly, simply function-

ing as it is meant to and unfolding the story like a fan.

Karl works as a labourer, too. Elizabeth trusts he will find work for Hugh. As Hugh sees it, "Elizabeth glanced at him across the table. He had been watching a stray hair which had wandered from her well-brushed head. As their eyes met, she looked back again to Karl. 'Can you fix a start for Hugh on Monday?' Karl sized him up. 'If he's willing to work hard, Brickie's mate, Hugh.'"

And then, as Karl perceives it: "Can you fix a start for Hugh on Monday?" She asked quietly. Of course, Elizabeth had but to ask, no matter what complication or indebtedness to those he despised that it might entail. It was against his interest, he knew simply by the way she spoke of the young man; but Elizabeth had made a request. He pretended to consider. 'If he's willing to work hard, Brickie's mate, Hugh.'"

This style, formal yet flexible, opens the novel out, and the different perspectives made these hardscrabble lives — death is a frequent visitor to this household and comfort too easily found in a bottle of wine or whiskey — vivid.

Casey's tale comes to the reader bearing praise from Sebastian Barry, and, like the author of *The Steward of Christendom* and *The Whereabouts of Eneas McNulty*, he has an unselfish but affectionate view of Ireland and the Irish.

His language is more austere than Barry's; his characters aren't given to speechifying and a large part of his skill is in the way he digs through their inarticulacy to find the real emotion beneath.

The Water Star is a graceful, gentle novel that does not shy from the truth. Is its metaphor of lives rebuilt from rubble — whether the detritus of the past or the structures shattered by the Blitz — too pat? Perhaps, sometimes. But reading along one finds oneself thinking, yes, but that's just how things are. That seems a small thing, but it is a fine compliment to a work of fiction.

THE WATER STAR
By Philip Casey
Picador, £14.99
ISBN 0 330 371 908



Blame it on the theorist

SEVERAL DECEPTIONS
By Jane Stevenson
Jonathan Cape, £14.99
ISBN 0 224 05939 4

JANE STEVENSON'S first collection of fiction consists of four novellas with the common theme of deception. A professor undercut by his own intellect amusingly blames all the problems in his life on the semantics of Umberto Eco. In another story, an international lawyer plays at terrorism. But the most finely tuned quartet tells the story of Judy O'Grady, an Irish woman who changes her name to Ananda and becomes a novice in a Tibetan monastery. Things heat up during a spell in Simla, the former British hill-station in northern India, when the unlikely heroine unexpectedly warms to the dying embers of colonialism. Stevenson's careful plotting and attention to detail prove she is a new voice worth listening to.

Into the fire

THE FAREWELL ANGEL
By Carmen Martin Gaité
Harvill, £9.99
ISBN 1 85046 358 4

LEONARDO is released from his Madrid prison cell on the same day as he learns his parents have died in a car crash. He returns home with a full wallet, but his heart is heavier still. First he reminisces in a sepia-toned haze, churning up memories which eventually lead him to a white house on the edge of a cliff where his grandmother raised him. But it is not until he meets the building's new owner that he is fully redeemed. This is essentially a novel about storytelling. Carmen Martin Gaité, a bestselling author in her native Spain, weaves traditional childhood tales into her own complex and peculiar one.

Alter ego

ALLAN STEIN: A Novel
By Matthew Stadler
Fourth Estate, £10
ISBN 1 84115 107 6

A SUCKER for small boys, Matthew Stadler swaps Seattle for Paris after an affair with a 15-year-old pupil switches from fantasy to reality. For the sheer hell of it, rather than disguise, he changes his name to that of his best friend back home: the museum curator Herbert Widener. "Herbert" is pathologically excitable and attracts trouble with the ease of an Enid Blyton heroine, and within 30 pages he becomes embroiled in a mystery involving a set of drawings which feature Allan Stein, the little nephew of Gertrude. Slipping in and out of fact and fiction with apparent effortlessness, Matthew Stadler's writing is slick, funny and ever so stylish.

ALEX O'CONNELL

All at sea (and loving it)

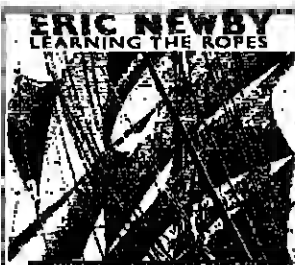
Tim Severin delights in a voyage on one of the greatest sailing ships ever built

Thanks to the State Literature Officer of Western Australia, I found myself last month in the small coastal town of Albany running a "Writer's Workshop". Among the local students was a tip of passage: a tall, well-spoken Englishman, rather old-fashioned and — I would guess — in his late fifties. He was explained, on his way round the world in a sailing ship, travelling in slow stages. I hoped to pick up a few tips about writing up his logbook, and perhaps there would be an account of his voyage.

I guessed he was retired and fulfilling his lifelong ambition. I asked him his favourite word — "Eric Newby" was the immediate reply.

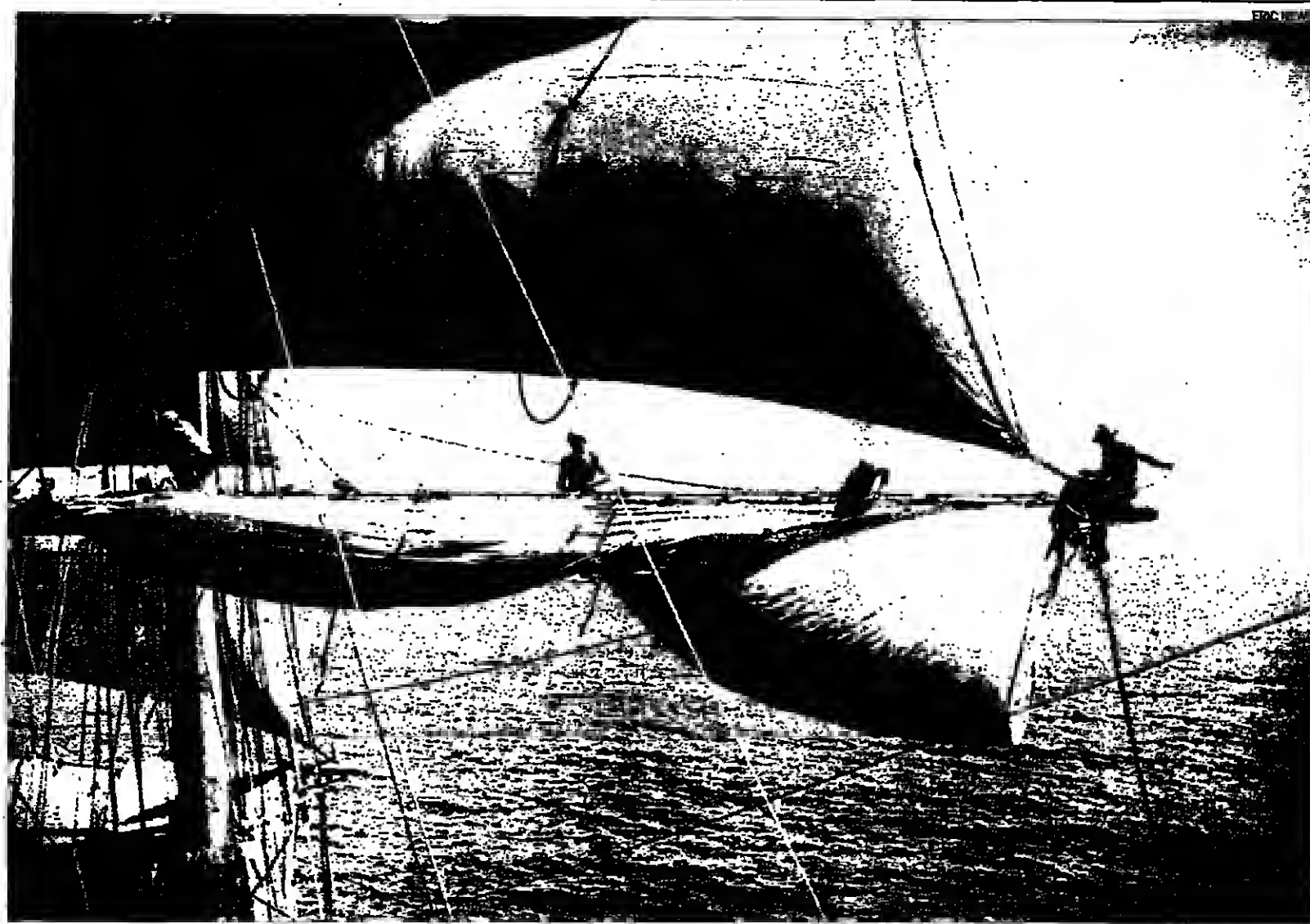
— and other Newby fans — will delight in *Learning the Ropes*. The book is the

LEARNING THE ROPES
By Eric Newby
John Murray
£22.50
ISBN 0 7195 5636 8



back to Europe with a load of wheat. Newby told us the tale initially in *The Last Grain Race* and, more recently, in *What the Traveller Saw*. But no matter — now he gets the chance to show us his photographs, and the publishers have done him proud.

The pictures are thoughtfully presented. They take us from the initial preparations in Cape of Good Hope, to the drab little Australian wheat ports, and back home around the Horn with a ferocious gale to contend with. The photographs



After 24 days at sea, the *Moshulu* rounded the northwest African coast — the man on the weather yard-arm is hauling out the head of the sail

are superb. Anyone who has known how tired one can be after hours of hard labour at sea must admire the gritty persistence with which the young photographer kept going with his folding bellows Zeiss Super Ikonta. The pictures from aloft show *Moshulu* and her sister ship bulk carriers were, it is claimed, the most powerful sailing ships ever built. They were also utilitarian to the point of starkness. There was no flourish, no panache, just plain hard-nosed money-making if operating costs could be cut to the bone. So the crews were minimal

and stingily paid — Newby got his job by return post because apprentices were cheap labour. He received ten shillings a month. The sailmaker, a master craftsman with 43 years' experience, got £7. The Captain did not do much better: he got £20 a month, "which didn't seem much for such a lonely position of responsibility".

Details like this, well-researched and deftly put, are packed into Newby's characteristically charming foreword and the captions to his pictures. They demonstrate how

he loved every moment of his trip — well, almost every moment. Oddly enough, doing the washing-up for the entire crew using half a kerosene can of hot water per session was, it seems, "far preferable" to cleaning the lavatories. One doesn't imagine that the apprentices left much on their plates. Newby makes the point that one common feature among the young seamen was their constant hunger. So it is the ultimate quirk that *Moshulu* is now tied up in Philadelphia and converted to a floating restaurant.

IN metro THIS SATURDAY
Welcome to the age of Witspell: Peter Ackroyd talks about his new novel, *The Plato Papers*, a satire set 2,000 years in the future.
ALSO: bowlers, squatters and blazers — *Adventures in Other England* by Nik Cohen; and God is a kamikaze pilot — the weird fictional world of Bo Fowler

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A myth the size of a mountain

W his Crazy Horse (Ti-Sunka-Witko) figured prominently among the thousands of Native Americans who taught us the meaning of the term, "Lone Bighorn", almost every other fact about him is open to debate. This is because he never once spoke for the public record, or allowed himself to become the sort of cigarette savant who signed autographs at Wild West shows for a dollar a pop. As Larry McMurtry argues in this fine meditation on the most elusive figure in American history, Crazy Horse wasn't shy of attention. It just didn't like to spend too much time with the sort of people who keep score.

Most trifling facts about Crazy Horse were collected in interviews with elderly Sioux well into the 20th century and, as a result, almost everything historians know about him has to be qualified by that incoherent adverb, "probably". He was probably born a member of the Oglala band of the Great Sioux nation in 1840, near what is now Bear Butte, South Dakota. He probably led the Sioux into some of their famous Bighorn victories, such as the battles of the Bozeman and the Rosebud. And he was probably responsible for leading Captain William Fetter and his troops beyond

SCOTT BRADFIELD
CRAZY HORSE
By Larry McMurtry
Penguin, £12.99
ISBN 0 297 84242 0



the safe perimeters of Fort Pike Kearney in December, 1866, where they were succintly slaughtered.

Neither high-born nor self-congratulatory, Crazy Horse was the closest thing to a populist that the Sioux Nation ever possessed. As a youth, he displayed a keen talent for horsemanship, and when he wasn't hunting buffalo, he was engaged in vision-quests, seeking instruction from the spirits he admired more than people. On one such mystic expedition, he was told to live the simple life, to shed adornments and devote himself solely to the weakest members of his tribe. Accord-



The enormous statue of Crazy Horse in South Dakota

ing to most accounts, he lived faithfully to these precepts for the rest of his life.

Crazy Horse did not surrender to the white generals so much as to the white weather. And when he turned over his arms after the terrible winter of 1876-77, he learnt from experience that deal-making with Washington was neither his, nor his people's, best suit.

After negotiating for hunting privileges which were immediately revoked, he displayed his victory by refusing to betray his people, and eventually developed a following among the youngest warriors of his tribe. This popularity was noted not only by Washington, but by Sioux leaders as well, most of whom considered Crazy Horse a threat. As McMurtry sees it, Crazy Horse was disliked by politi-

cians on both sides for not being sufficiently political. In the end, it cost him his life.

On September 6, 1877, Crazy Horse was slain by an unremarkable private named William Gentes while resisting efforts to incarcerate him. As should be expected from such a mythical life, nobody agrees on what happened that day, or has any idea where Crazy Horse's parents eventually disposed of his body.

Today, though, the world's largest sculpture is being dynamited into the Black Hills of South Dakota. It has taken more than half a century to complete and when it is finished it will depict not only the head of Crazy Horse, but also the only indisputable fact about him: he may not be clearly remembered, but he was definitely larger than life.

Nimble-fingered

When we speak of the Holocaust, the images summoned are mostly those of the concentration camp. Wladyslaw Szpilman's powerful memoir, *The Pianist* (Gollancz, £12.99; ISBN 0 575 06708 X) supplies a whole other iconography, that of the Warsaw ghetto. A Jewish pianist, he managed to survive the ghetto and outside it in Warsaw on the run.

The most dramatic aspect of Szpilman's story comes in the war's final days when he was discovered by a German officer. On learning that he was a pianist, Wilm Hosenfeld persuaded him to play the Chopin Nocturne in C sharp minor. Hosenfeld then showed him where to hide and brought him food.

One can see why the Polish authorities had Szpilman's book withdrawn soon after its publication in 1946. His account of the "good Poles" who hid him may have been ideologically acceptable, but that of a "good German" wasn't. Yet the Hosenfeld section of the book is the least interesting. Far more arresting are his tableaux of ghetto life — the lice so inescapable they even penetrated the bread; a German officer's casual defecation of a dazed old man in the building opposite; the corpses who stare up at him

as he makes his way home each night.

The ghetto remains for most of us an unfathomable place. Szpilman describes the torment of confinement. He's also an artful guide to the differences between the Jews in the ghetto — not the homogeneous group of the Nazi imagination, but people whose pre-war status was reproduced during the war. Szpilman observes them from one of the ghetto cafes where he plays. He also recounts the sadism of the Jewish police and the daring of the underground to which he belonged.

Once he's been spirited out of the ghetto, the book becomes a desperate chronicle of hunger, loneliness and pessimism. Looking out on a bombed landscape, he imagines himself the last person alive. Twice he's on the point of suicide when capture seems imminent. The third time he swallows sleeping-pills but awakes the next day.

For me, this book had an added poignancy. The Chopin Nocturne which saved Szpilman's life was the same one which saved my mother's, when she played it in Plazow concentration camp for Amos Goeth. What would Frédéric Chopin have made of that?

ANNE KARPf

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

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Bargains of the week: abiding memories in Devon; a gourmet gathering in Guernsey, the art of Van Dyck in Antwerp



PACK YOUR BAGS

A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and further afield, many at bargain prices

BRITISH ISLES

ABBA are making a big noise in London again with the opening of *Mamma Mia*, featuring many of the group's songs. Top seats together with Friday and Saturday night at a central four-star hotel, plus dinner with champagne, are on offer from Theatrebreak. The package costs £219, with discounts available over the next two Bank Holiday weekends. Details: 01904 079999.

THE hymn *Abide With Me* caused more excitement than Abba when sung at Wembley Cup Finals, and the Rev Henry Lyte, who wrote it, can be remembered at the Berry Head Hotel, his former home overlooking the sea at Brixham, Devon. Two nights' din-

ner, B&B costs £96 with Sunvil UK for the next two weekends. Details: 0181-232 9788.

THE boat comes free, for a day at least, on holidays with Norfolk Broads Direct until May 23. Stay in apartments beside the river at Wroxham from £111 for a short break (£164 for a week) and a motor launch will be provided for a day. Details: 01603 782207.

GOURMETS can enjoy Guernsey's eating experience competition this month on a visit to a winning hotel, which includes a five-course meal the first night, seven the next and a rest on the third. The three-night break with Guernsey Travel Service costs £229, with return flights from Gatwick. Details: 0181-891 6020.

CHESTER can be explored at a saving this month with Goldenrail, which has dinner, B&B at the Queens Hotel for £49. Details: 01904 638973.

COTTAGES in Rosscorbery, Co Cork, are available for two weeks at the price of one from April 17 with Irish Ferries Holidays. The offer cuts the price for a fortnight to £63 if six are sharing. Travel by sea or air can also be arranged. Details: 08705 170000.

EUROPE

TUSCANY can be enjoyed at special prices, before the politicians and superstars arrive for their summer holidays. Crystal Premier Italy has reduced the price for a week in selected villas from the next two Saturdays to £249, based on five sharing, but including car hire and return flights from Gatwick. Or you can take two weeks for the price of one. Details: 0181-390 5554.

PRAGUE discounts are available this month from Travellers Czech: three nights' B&B cost from £289, including return flights from Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester. Details: 01959 540700.

GREECE's quieter islands and resorts are on special offer next month from Greek Options. Villa and apartment holidays cost from £199, including return flights from Gatwick on the first three Sundays. Details: 0171-233 5233.

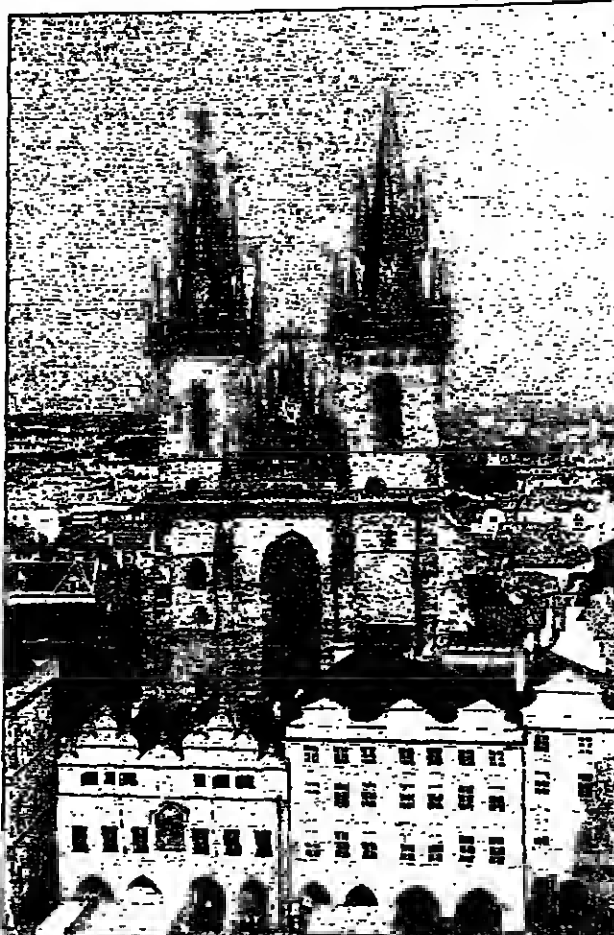
ORCHIDS, violets and white narcissi burst into flower in the Massif Central in May and will make a perfect backdrop to walks with Belle France, available all month. A circular tour, walking about 11

miles each day and enjoying four nights half-board in three hotels in the Cévennes, costs from £336, with a short Channel crossing for car and passengers. Details: 01797 23777.

VAN DYCK will be the next artist, after Monet's success in London, to draw huge crowds in Antwerp to the largest exhibition of his works, and Prospect Music and Art Tours is planning ahead to spare enthusiasts long queues. Two-night breaks in four-star hotels, a timed entry ticket and return Eurostar travel will be available from May 18 from £199. Details: 0171-486 5705.

MALTA for a week for £159 — and with half-board — is on offer from Lunn Poly, with a flight from Gatwick on April 16. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

FREE flights are a promotion from Orient Lines for selected Aegean holidays combining a cruise and city break. The offer cuts the price for a week to £735, including five nights' full board on a cruise to Ephesus, Mykonos and Rhodes and two nights in a first-class hotel in Istanbul. The first trip begins with a BA flight from Heathrow on May 18. Details: 0171-409 2500.



In the heart of Prague, available on a three-night bargain

LONG HAUL

A RED SEA Discovery cruise, sailing on April 15, is available at huge discounts from Voyages of Discovery, even though the region is less troubled today than other parts of the world. Prices for outside cabins are reduced to £699 and for inside ones to £599, including full board and return flights to Crete for the ten-night trip to Israel, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Details: 01293 433030.

A PARADISE isle at a dream price is on offer until June 30 from Thomas Cook Holidays. A fortnight at Langkawi Holiday Villas, Malaysia, costs £499, with return flights from Manchester, or £40 more from Heathrow. No meals included but because the Asian economies are still in trouble the cost of living is low. Details: 01733 418450.

FLORIDA without the kids comes cheap at the moment with Jetset. Families are the Disney state's most frequent visitors so, with children back at school, prices have been cut. Best deals are from Cardiff with return flights on April 23 and car hire costing from £149. Deals for less than £200, with flights from Gatwick and

Glasgow later this month also on offer and can be arranged. Details: 01342 38888.

THAILAND two-centenary holidays are on offer from Tradewinds, so you can sample the bustle of Bangkok for four nights, spending ten quieter ones at Pantaya resort hotel. The comes with flights from Heathrow between May 1 and June 30. Details: 0870-751 0004.

ZIMBABWE tours are being reduced by £25 to £125 waves until June 30, cutting the cost of a week's sightseeing. The package includes return Saturday flights from Gatwick, B&B in hotel and the tour taking in Harare, Kariba, Hwange and Victoria Falls. Details: 0181-675 118.

All prices per person are based on two sharing a room unless otherwise stated.

WEEKEND TRAVEL

See The Times on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

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The Future of IT" and
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Instant". For the first time
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Simply take the voucher below to one of the participating supermarkets listed to claim your discount.

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This voucher entitles the bearer to a bottle of 500ml bottle of Carapelli Extra Virgin Olive Oil at 66p less than the marked price. This offer is valid until Friday April 30, 1999. Coupon valid as part payment only. Only one coupon can be used against each item purchased.

TO THE RETAILER: NCH Marketing Services will redeem this coupon at the face value provided ONLY if it has been taken as part payment for a 500ml bottle of Carapelli Extra Virgin Olive Oil. They reserve the right to refuse payment against misused coupons. Please submit coupons to: NCH Marketing Services, Corby, Northants, NN17 1NN.

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The government's agenda for the NHS is both challenging and exciting. Joining now would give you the opportunity to see a regional office develop, and help shape the health service of the future. Effective leadership and development support is required to implement NHS Executive policy in key strategic areas.

You must have strategic vision with management and development skills to help stimulate innovation within the South East Region. You will be working closely with Health Authorities and Trusts in developing their strategic planning and organisation learning processes. You will act as an integral part of the policy, strategic and development framework.

To succeed in this role, you need substantial experience in strategic management and planning and development. With five to ten years' senior management experience at Board level, ideally within the Health Care sector, you will hold a health care related management or professional qualification. As well as demonstrating leadership you will have excellent communication skills with high interpersonal skills, particularly in influencing and negotiating.

The starting salary will be in the range £49,130 - £80,400, but more may be available for an exceptional candidate. The appointment will be made on permanent contract terms. Job shares and secondments will also be considered. Relocation expenses may be available.

For a job description and information pack please call our 24 hour Recruitment Line on 0171 725 5357 quoting reference number SE10/99.

The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is 23rd April 1999.

Provisional interview date: 12th May 1999.

As an equal opportunities employer, the Department of Health welcomes applications regardless of gender, race, disability or sexuality. The Department operates flexible working patterns within a non-smoking environment.

NHS
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THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Appointment of Chairman to Caledonian MacBrayne Limited

Caledonian MacBrayne Limited is a Government owned company which is responsible for part of the operation of a network of approved ferry services, which in the opinion of the Secretary of State are necessary to maintain or improve economic or social conditions in the Highlands and Islands. The Board currently consists of a Chairman, 5 other appointed non-executive members and 4 executive members. The Chairman's vacancy will arise with effect from 1 August 1999. The period of appointment is at the discretion of Ministers but will not normally be for less than 3 years, with the possibility of renewal.

Applications are invited from people with the background and skills necessary to be a dynamic and effective Chairman of Caledonian MacBrayne. The successful candidate will have a broad knowledge of Highlands and Islands issues as well as transport issues. He or she should also possess sound analytical, presentational and communication skills, excellent chairmanship ability and the capacity to provide direction, strong leadership, inspiration and motivation for Caledonian MacBrayne Board and staff.

The Chairman will need to be able to devote 11½ days per week to the post. The post currently attracts a salary of £21,735 per annum.

If you think you have the necessary qualities and would like to be sent an application form and accompanying information package please contact:

Gerry Smith Esq, The Scottish Office Development Department, Area 2-E, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ. Tel: 0131 244 0844. Fax: 0131 244 0871.
E-mail: gerry.smith@scotland.gov.uk All correspondence will be treated strictly in confidence. Application forms should be submitted by 30 April 1999.

The Scottish Office is committed to the principles of equal opportunities and public appointments based on merit, independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.

Under the provisions of the Scotland Act 1998 this appointment will fall to be made by a member of the Scottish Executive.

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Head of Department - Investment Business Division

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In this senior post, your contribution will be equally visible.

Leading a team of 170, currently organised as the PIA Firms Department, you will assume overall responsibility for monitoring the business conduct of some 4000 regulated firms - from sole trader independent IFAs to household name life insurance companies.

At the same time you will lead on a range of top level policy and management issues, and you will be proactive in spotting emerging trends and devising any appropriate regulatory response within an industry for which the needs and interests of customers should always be paramount.

Few roles will give you as broad an overview of the retail financial services market as this. Fewer still can offer the scope to make such a key contribution to its development. That is why we are looking to appoint a consummate professional, possibly from a compliance background, who

combines first class analytical, drafting, negotiation and presentation skills with the presence and managerial flair to take a large team through periods of significant change.

Someone, in short, who can lead from the top.

If that someone is you, please telephone 0171 269 6204 quoting reference GP412.

Closing date for receipt of applications: 26th April 1999.



Financial Services Authority

Finance Director

A fully qualified accountant is needed for a leading media communications agency based in central London. The company is expanding quickly and requires somebody who is flexible, intelligent and charismatic. The successful candidate will report to the Managing Director and will be part of a core team that drives the business forward. The role requires a balance of strategic and operational expertise. Neither advertising nor media experience is a requirement. The successful candidate will however have to demonstrate successful management of all key financial processes.

For the successful candidate there will be a substantial basic salary, profit share and the normal executive benefits.

As part of the recruitment process, all short-listed candidates will be psychometrically profiled.

Male or female applicants should send their CV's to:

Robert Willoughby
Strategic Resource Solutions
6th Floor
Nicholson's House
Maidenhead
Berkshire
SL6 1LD

Employment and Training Schemes for People with Mental Health Problems.

Director

Richmond Fellowship Work Schemes
£40,000 plus car. Central London

Are you someone with leadership, business development and management skills who wants to make a real social contribution?

RFW Work Schemes is an independent charity, part of the Richmond Fellowship Group. A leader in the field of helping and empowering people with mental health problems.

Work Schemes helps more than 700 people at any one time in 15 projects. The Director has responsibility to lead and develop the business and keep the organisation as the acknowledged quality provider in its field.

If you think you have the skills, knowledge and commitment, then contact the Richmond Fellowship's Consultants, HACAS Consulting at: United House, North Road, London N7 9DP. Tel: 0171 808 9481 (24 hours), Fax: 0171 700 7589 e-mail: hacas@hacas.co.uk

For an informal chat, ask to speak to Derek Joseph or Sue Piper



HACAS Consulting
HOUSING - FINANCE - CARE

Richmond Fellowship is committed to equality of opportunity.

THE CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION (Lisbon)

Director of the U.K. Branch, London

Applications are invited for the post of Director of the Foundation's United Kingdom Branch in succession to the present Director Ben Whitaker who will be retiring in September 1999.

The Branch's work is organised around three main programmes for Arts, Education and Social Welfare, together with a special programme for Anglo-Portuguese Cultural Relations, in the UK and Ireland. Each of these four programmes is administered in detail by an assistant director. The candidate chosen is likely to have a substantial record of experience, leadership and achievement in one or more of the fields covered by the Foundation's main programmes, and sympathies which embrace the others. A knowledge of the Portuguese language would be an advantage though not essential for this post. The Foundation specialises in imaginative, innovative and cost-effective grant-making, which last year totalled some £2m. The appointment will be for five years in the first instance, which may possibly be extended by mutual agreement. Completed application will be required by not later than 4th May 1999.

Persons interested in applying for this full-time post in central London should obtain the detailed job description which includes information about the Foundation and its work and about the salary and conditions of service, and which is available from the Bursar at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch), 98 Portland Place, London W1N 4ET. Tel. No. 0171 636 5313 ext. 216. Fax No. 0171 636 3421. The Foundation strongly believes in Equal Opportunities.

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Keeping our success on track . . .

We are now looking for two exceptional individuals to drive our business forward.

Both positions offer excellent career prospects and the opportunity to make a real impact.

Senior Brand Manager - Tyres

Ref: MITPLC/W/2

To take control of the group's flagship brand in the car sector. This role requires a high level of marketing and commercial acumen, plus the potential to develop rapidly into a Senior Management role. You will be a graduate with a marketing or commercial qualification with at least 5 years' relevant experience in marketing and brand management. Mobility for this position is essential.

Brand Manager - Maps and Guides

Ref: MITPLC/W/3

This role is pivotal to the success of our marketing strategy. A graduate with at least two years' marketing experience, you'll already have held a junior brand manager

position. Commercially astute with strong interpersonal skills, you're ready to make your mark with a progressive, global company.

Based in Hertfordshire, both positions require positive, dynamic individuals with innovative flair and astute commercial abilities. Background is not important but some experience in FMCG environments would be a real advantage, as would a working knowledge of French.

The company offers genuine career opportunities and excellent benefits which will reflect your skills and abilities to influence the process of change within the organisation.

In return, you can look forward to excellent career development opportunities and early advancement in a world-class environment.

To apply, please write enclosing your CV to: Carl A Maffat, Human Resources Department, Michelin Tyre PLC, Campbell Road, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4EY.

Please quote the appropriate reference number.

Replies must be received by 30 April 1999.

Michelin is an Equal Opportunities Employer

Sammons

HUMAN RESOURCE OPPORTUNITIES

based in Central London

HR Manager - Investment Bank £60 - £80,000
To join a quality global institution. Ideally graduate educated and IPD qualified, this role calls for a proactive solutions based HR professional with extensive experience as an HR Manager in a similar City environment. Excellent benefits. Ref: 12262

HR Manager c£50,000
Help reshape and develop the HR delivery in a prestigious Law practice. We seek a senior manager (probably graduate educated with IPD), to assume relationship responsibility for key client groups. Key involvement areas will include HR team management, manpower planning, strategy, Partner interaction, recruitment, appraisal process with some Learning & Development. Ref: 12187

Personnel Manager to £45,000
This is a new appointment with a very substantial professional practice. Candidates must be of graduate calibre, IPD qualified and have at least 5 years successful Personnel delivery experience in a law firm or other professional practice environment. First class interpersonal, communication and people influencing skills are essential. Ref: 45949

HR Officers x2 £25 - £32,000
To join leading City organisations. We seek graduate level individuals, GIPD or QBE, ideally with at least 3 years of solid experience as a Generalist in a busy, proactive HR environment, excellent PC skills and Employment Law knowledge. In both positions an across the board HR client support involvement will be expected. Ref: 12077

HR Analyst c£25,000
Global Investment Bank requires a numerate individual with excellent Excel and Access skills. Key tasks will involve the maintenance and analysis of Global Headcount and Compensation information and report preparation, along with ongoing project based tasks. Excellent career development prospects. Ref: 12151

To discuss these and other HR opportunities, or to apply, please contact

Sammons HUMAN RESOURCES RECRUITMENT
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Tel: 0171 293 7055 Fax: 0171 929 3858
email: hr@sammons.co.uk http://www.sammonsgroup.co.uk

PART OF THE SAMMONS GROUP

Freshwater Policy Officer

English Nature is the Government body which promotes the conservation of wildlife and natural features of England, employing over 700 people throughout the country.

Permanent appointment - Peterborough

English Nature is seeking an individual with drive and enthusiasm to develop and promote policies for wildlife conservation in the freshwater environment. The post will be part of a small team based in our national office in Peterborough. It will have a lead role in securing protection of rivers and lakes from agricultural diffuse pollution; manage a major partnership project on UK rivers; and be responsible for forging closer links with our 21 local teams and other national conservation bodies.

Qualifications: An honours degree and at least five years' experience in nature conservation or other policy-oriented career. Good communication skills and computer literacy are also required.

Salary: Salary range is £21,500 - £32,461. Starting salary is normally the minimum of the range, however more may be available for an exceptional candidate.

For further details and application form please contact Sandra Kennedy, Environmental Impacts Team, English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA. Tel: 01733 455202.

The closing date for completed applications is 30 April 1999.

Interviews will be held on 20 May 1999.

We have a no smoking policy within English Nature.

English Nature is working towards Equal Opportunities, and welcomes applications from all members of society.

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Tel. 33 1 476 68384 - Fax 33 1 462 24127



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We now seek two focused Sales Professionals to join our highly progressive Business Team and build on their success. Armed with a successful track record in selling IT or Telecommunications services/products, you will develop effective Customer relationships and possess the tenacity to drive business through from conception to successful conclusion. RAM offers the best in pre/post sales support and excellent prospects in this lucrative market sector.

Ready to join the revolution? Call our retained Consultant, Kevin Lamb now on 01344 762616 for an informal discussion, or forward your resumé in confidence to him at:

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Fax: 01344 762573
Email: klamb@kestrelnetwork.co.uk



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This challenge may alarm some people. But not those with energy, commercial acumen and management skills to build on Help the Aged's 10 years of working in the response alarm market. It's a vital service, enabling our clients to stay constantly in touch with a rapid response centre in case of any emergency. It gives older people the peace of mind and liberation to lead fuller lives. Now we need someone who will respond to a challenging environment with vitality, vision and drive.

You're a successful manager who will take this high profile, highly responsible role further. Shaping our business plan and recommending strategies for growth, you'll seize and cultivate opportunities to expand our client base with a variety of organisations. You'll take the initiative, working alongside other Help the Aged teams, including Communications, to maximise opportunities but never compromising our high standards of care for which you will be responsible. Above all, you'll build long-term, productive relationships, internally and externally, to improve our business processes and ensure we stay ahead of social and technological advances.

You're someone who is excited by challenge, with the people-management skills to drive change and be a positive, constructive influence in any team. If fact, you'll need an impressive managerial track record, with at least 5 years' business management and budgetary control experience, 2 of which have been spent in a senior role. You will also have knowledge of Response Centres, their services and technology or experience of delivering services. In our demanding environment, you'll need the flexibility to handle pressure with confidence. PC literacy, including word processing and spreadsheets, together with proven numeracy, relating to budgets and forecasting, is essential.

Send a letter of application together with your CV to the Human Resources Department, Help the Aged, St. James's Walk, London EC1R 0BE. It is anticipated that interviews will take place on the 5th and 7th May 1999. We are committed to equal opportunities and operate a non-smoking policy. Closing date for applications 23 April 1999. As a Charity we are only able to reply to those selected for interview. If you do not hear from us within 5 weeks, we regret that your application has not been successful on this occasion.

Business Analyst – Strategy Development
City to £45,000 + Benefits

Linklaters is one of the world's leading law firms with a global network of offices in each of the world's major economies. We have recently joined with four leading law firms in Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and Sweden to establish the leading international law practice for multi-jurisdictional advice.

To support this growth, Linklaters & Paines is seeking a high calibre Business Analyst to assist in the continuing development of firm and practice strategy as part of a small and cohesive central management team. The work will cover a wide range of activities associated with managing a major professional services firm, and will involve considerable responsibility from the outset.

The role:

- Reports to the Managing Partner and Director of Strategy.
- Performs analysis on a range of strategic, marketing, financial and organisational issues.
- Assists with the business planning process and the analysis of performance.
- Researches various business development opportunities.

The person:

- Will be educated to degree level (2.1 or above).
- Will have had two or three years post university experience gained ideally in one of the leading strategy consulting firms.
- Will have a strong analytical background, focused around either business strategy, finance or marketing.
- Will have good interpersonal skills, drive and the enthusiasm to work in a stimulating and enjoyable environment, covering a range of cross-functional issues.

Interested candidates should apply in writing, quoting reference 497595 and enclosing a comprehensive copy of their CV to David Trapnell at Michael Page, Page House, 39-41 Parker Street, London WC2B 5LN or fax on 0171 831 2612 or e-mail: davidtrapnell@michaelpage.com

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& ALLIANCE**Are you looking for a challenge?****Assistant Finance Director**

London W6 Package to £53,418 + Benefits

A superb opportunity now exists at Notting Hill Housing Trust. The Trust manages over 14,000 homes, housing 40,000 people in the London area. The successful candidate will be working for one of the leading, progressive housing associations, committed to both your professional and personal development.

The Role

This challenging role will be reporting to the Group Director of Finance and Resources. Leading a team of dedicated professional finance managers in driving the financial performance of the group, you will influence the strategic development of the group, by assessing the viability of new business and identifying ways to improve existing business performance.

The Person

The successful candidate will be a qualified accountant, a good communicator with excellent leadership skills and have a significant track record of achievement at senior management level. You will be a commercial, entrepreneurial thinker with some practical experience of the capital markets, financial planning, preparing tenders and assessing new business initiatives.

For further information, contact our recruitment advisers, Hays Accountancy Personnel, at 14 Great Castle Street, London W1N 7AD quoting reference: M77NH03. Tel: 0171 436 5533. Fax: 0171 323 9752. E-mail: west-end.personnel@hays.co.uk. Closing date for the response to this post is 23rd April 1999.

Hays Accountancy Personnel

PUBLIC SECTOR

Mobile IT/Telecommunications Business Development Manager
Nationwide

1999 sees the launch of the world's first national digital mobile communications network. Our client is investing hundreds of millions of pounds and working closely with partners such as BT to build this unique network. Rolled out across Europe, they will be able to provide companies the speed of high-speed mobile data transmission, internet/intranet access, one-to-one telephony and functionality previously unavailable on any existing single network. In short, they will revolutionise businesses communicate.

Managing sales cycles ranging from 1-6 months and longer, the ability to listen and understand essential. You must have strong presentation skills, drive, tenacity, a sixth sense for clients' needs and satisfy them.

You may currently be involved with a specific vertical market, such as:

- Transportation Distribution ■ Manufacturing ■ Construction ■ Government
- Field Service ■ Airlines ■ Business Services

You may currently be involved selling products and services such as:

- Facilities management ■ Disaster recovery
- Outsourcing contracts ■ Capital Equipment
- Office Equipment ■ PABXs ■ PCs ■ Software

For further information please contact Ben Atfield or one of his resourcing team on 0171 806 1472. Alternatively, send your CV with details of your current remuneration, quoting reference number BAST119 to Ben Atfield at McGregor Boyall Telecommunications, 114 Middlesex Street, London E1 7JH. Fax: 0171 377 0569. E-mail: dolphind@mcgregor-boyall.com

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Due to our success at acquiring new business, we are currently looking for qualified actuaries to join our busy employee benefits department. Successful candidates will hold a current Scheme Actuary certificate, and the role will be Actuarial Adviser to a portfolio of corporate clients.

You should be a team player with strong communication and negotiation skills, and have the enthusiasm and desire to succeed in a competitive environment.

Near Qualified Pensions Actuary

Range £40,000 - £50,000 inc.

If you are a part qualified actuary with four years' experience in a pensions consultancy environment, and would like the opportunity to establish yourself in an independent, successful company then we would like to hear from you.

You will have responsibility for monitoring and assisting other part qualified members of the actuarial team in the execution of their duties. Your actuarial studies will be actively supported by our professional team and, once qualified, you will be given consultancy responsibilities. You should therefore be client-focused with strong communication skills.

Human Resources Generalist

Range £35,000 - £47,000 inc.

Due to our continuing expansion, we are looking for an individual with excellent all round knowledge of Human Resource issues to join our professional team. The successful candidate may have experience in Recruitment, or Training and Development and be interested in the IPD qualification. The ability to work under pressure and to tight deadlines is essential. Additionally the ideal candidate will have an interest in employment legislation and good IT skills.

Our Flexible Benefits Package includes the option to home up to 60 days Annual Leave.

If you think you can rise to the challenge and are attracted to an environment that promotes real achievement, please apply in the strictest confidence to:

Don Brooks - Human Resources Executive, Gissings Consultancy Services Limited, Firstbury House, 23 Firstbury Circus, London EC2M 7UH. E-mail: BROOKSD@Gissings.co.uk

Corporate Healthcare Adviser

Range £35,000 - £47,000 inc.

Due to our ongoing success in the Healthcare market, we are looking for a person with experience in healthcare consultancy, or private medical insurance, to join our professional team. To meet our requirements candidates should have the ability to deliver business presentations, be able to retain, service and develop existing clients, have good interpersonal skills and be an enthusiastic and dynamic team player.

Facilities Executive

Range £35,000 - £47,000 inc.

Due to continued expansion, we are looking for an individual with proven capabilities within an office-based administration environment. The successful candidate will be responsible for all aspects of office administration on a daily basis, including project work and site maintenance. The ideal candidate will be able to prioritise their own and other workloads, be able to work to tight deadlines, and also possess strong IT skills. Applications from individuals who have served in the Ministry of Defence will be considered.

Profund Specialist

Range £30,000 - £40,000 inc.

The opportunity for a professional to join our Profund System support team. The ideal candidate should have at least three years' experience in a Profund environment either as a user or in a system support role, a thorough knowledge of Profund's architecture, database administration, system analysis and organisational skills and a willingness to fully participate as part of an ambitious and professional team.



Business Link London Central is a successful and dynamic member of the national Business Link Network providing professional advice and support for small and medium sized businesses.

We are a highly motivated, proactive and client focused team and are looking to add a number of keen, energetic and innovative individuals to contribute to our continuing commitment to help businesses grow and prosper.

We recognise the need to invest in the development of our people to ensure that they can make the best possible use of their skills and expertise in pursuit of business excellence.

Do you have the necessary energy, enthusiasm and communication skills allied with a broad and practical business background to contribute positively to the range of opportunities on offer?

If so, send your CV and letter stating how you meet the requirements, quoting the relevant reference number to:

John Henderson,
Quantum Enterprise Development,
2 Challenge Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster,
DN4 5NU
Tel: 01382 761222
Fax: 01382 761333
e-mail: joeh@compuserve.co.uk

Human Resources Manager (Ref No 90401)

Circa £35k + 15% performance bonus

As an experienced professional with full IPD membership and five years experience of HR management with experience of IP and ISO9001 you will be expected to make a major contribution to the continuing success of B.L.C. Using the Business Excellence Model as your framework you will influence business strategy and oversee all formal accreditation requirements as well as managing and co-ordinating all staff recruitment and development.

Business Adviser (Ref No 90402)

Circa £34k + 15% performance bonus

As a Business Adviser you will need to have in-depth business knowledge, professional qualifications and experience across several functions. You will work closely with some of the most dynamic businesses in the area, play a key role in the local business community and conduct detailed analyses and investigations to interpret current performance and support the development of our clients.

Finance Counsellor (Ref No 90403)

Circa £34k + 15% performance bonus

The Finance Counsellor will work with small and medium sized businesses to provide a full financial planning service to develop and implement sound financial principles to underpin their growth and development. You will use your financial and finance raising experience to enable our clients to pursue their business goals.

Quality Manager (Ref No 90404)

Circa £28k + 15% performance bonus

Reporting to the Human Resources Manager you will be expected to ensure that the B.L.C. team is supported by high quality processes and systems to underpin the quality of service to clients. Within the framework of the Business Excellence Model you will be expected to use your considerable ISO9001 experience to make a major contribution to manage the Quality System and to ensure that all formal accreditation requirements are met and exceeded.



We are committed to an Equal Opportunities Policy and actively encourage applications from all sections of the community

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**PR & Communications Manager**

Competitive Package

London

Control Risks Group is an international business risk consultancy servicing over 3,500 multi-nationals via 16 offices worldwide. Its mission is to enable its clients to succeed in complex or hostile business environments. As part of its global business strategy it is looking to reposition Public Relations as part of the marketing mix and to capitalise on the proactive and creative use of internal and external communications as a key to future success.

The Challenge

- To support the business development strategy, liaising with business managers to identify and communicate key corporate messages externally and around the global network
- To produce detailed and strategic communications plans
- To develop an international PR network
- To initiate and manage press campaigns to be mirrored worldwide
- To pro-actively yet creatively manage PR communication via a wide-range of tools including website, brochures, newsletters whilst maintaining strong client confidentiality ethos.

The Requirement

We are looking for an experienced PR professional (4+ years) with strong commercial focus and an interest in international affairs; a practical, common-sense approach; results orientated with a natural influencing style; excellent communication skills and experience of crisis management situations.

This is a unique challenge within a distinctive organisation. If you think you can make a major contribution to moving our visual profile forward, please apply by sending CV with covering letter, stating current salary to Debra Farnon - Group Personnel Manager, Control Risks Group Limited, 83 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0HW or e-mail to recruitment@control-risks.com.

NATIONAL DAIRYMEN'S ASSOCIATION**RETAIL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

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Role

Reporting to the Association's Director you will work closely with leading people in the industry to help Members maximise their doorstep business. You will become an essential source of advice on a wide range of issues affecting direct sales retailing and manage a series of initiatives to increase the industry's customers.

Candidates

A graduate with a minimum of two years experience in a business oriented culture you may have a marketing qualification or experience gained in the food/retailing sector. You must be an effective communicator, able to direct meetings, write with style to deadlines and be able to grasp the dynamics of this industry quickly.

If you are interested in this position please send your cv, in confidence, to Ms Emily Elington, National Dairymen's Association, 19 Cornwell Terrace, London, NW11 4QP.

£60,000 plus Bonus

Small IMRO regulated Investment Management Firm urgently seeks an experienced (not less than 15 years) International Fixed Income Fund Manager with experience in credit analysis. He or she will have at least two years experience in dealing with a European client base and speak fluent German. Further requirements are a University degree, CFA, IMRO and IBC registration. Job is based in London but requires extensive travelling throughout Europe.

Please respond to box number 5771.

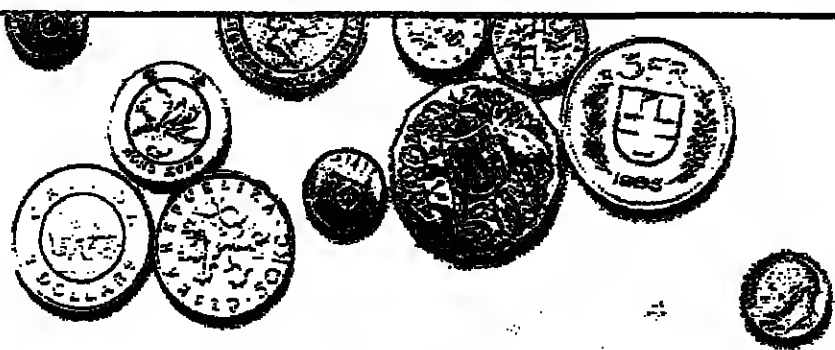
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world-class environment where personal qualities are just as important as technical skills. Everyone is encouraged to contribute new ideas and fresh approaches, and you'll be no exception.

You should be an enthusiastic team-player with the drive and determination to challenge the status quo and enhance process and product performance. And since all Mars companies share an outstanding record for developing their people, there's no limit to what you could ultimately achieve. In addition to a competitive salary, you'll qualify for a valuable package of non-contributory benefits including pension, health care and life assurance schemes.

So if you've got what it takes to make the most of these outstanding long-term career opportunities, contact us now. To obtain further information and a personal data form which you can add to your CV, please call our 24-hour answerphone on 01189 446941, quoting ref: LSE.

We are an equal-opportunity employer.



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Dixons will offer you the opportunity and training to enable you to succeed and will reward you with a competitive package. If you are interested, please send your CV and current salary details to Kay Jones - Wolsey at Talsman, Portland House, 4 Great Portland Street, London W1N 5AA by 19 April 1999.

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the graduate job bulletin

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THE SUNDAY TIMES
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Members of the scheme will be trained in all aspects of journalism. This is an opportunity for young graduates - or those graduating this summer - with determination, flair, talent and writing ability to start their career with The Sunday Times. Applications should be made, with cv, in the first instance to:

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Managing Editor
The Sunday Times
1 Pennington Street
London E1 9XW

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Selected candidate will perform strategic financial analysis on markets in the US, Latin America and Asia for global planning. Two years minimum experience in major financial institution required. Senior relationships with institutional clients and public agencies a must. Must be fluent in at least one Asian language (Chinese or Japanese). Previous small business experience a plus. Knowledge of database applications preferred. Graduate studies in economics preferred. Excellent package.

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Selected candidate will perform economic and strategic financial analysis on markets in Europe, US and Latin America. 3 years minimum experience in blue chip financial services firm. Senior relationships with institutional clients in US and Europe essential. Stock individual fluent in at least two-three European languages. Previous sales/marketing experience and knowledge of e-commerce a plus. Graduate studies preferred. Excellent package. Please fax CV to 32 2 216 9140

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Do you have the necessary energy, enthusiasm and communication skills allied with a broad and practical business background to contribute positively to the range of opportunities on offer?

If so, send your CV and letter stating how you meet the requirements, quoting the relevant reference number to:

John Henderson,
Quantum Enterprise Development,
2 Stirling Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster,
DN4 5NU
Tel: 01522 761222
Fax: 01522 761333
e-mail: john.henderson@quantum.co.uk

Business Development Executive (Ref No 90405)

Circa £33k + 15% performance bonus
To contribute effectively to this role you will need to have sales experience in a business to business environment, and the motivation to succeed. You will enthusiastically sell BLLC's services, proactively identify and contact potential clients, increase awareness of BLLC and promote the services to businesses and intermediaries. General business acumen and a good understanding of how small and medium enterprises operate is essential.

Product Manager (Ref No 90406)

Circa £25k + 15% performance bonus
A graduate with a track record of developing new products and services in a business to business environment, you will be responsible for researching, developing, and evaluating new products and services to ensure that BLLC's range of services reflect client needs. You will review and improve existing services on a regular basis in line with client feedback, market changes and other developments.

Business Development Co-ordinator (Ref No 90407)

Circa £24k + 15% performance bonus
As the first point of contact for BLLC business enquiries you will be responsible for advising potential clients of the range of services available. You will have the ability to deal knowledgeably with business enquiries and to qualify, allocate, administer and evaluate all leads. Your previous telephone sales/call centre experience and your IT skills will enable you to provide a professional and knowledgeable business advisory service to all callers.

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To apply please forward your CV, stating current salary package, to Mrs J Paine, Personnel Department, Mercedes-Benz (UK) Limited, Tongwell, Milton Keynes MK15 8BA to arrive no later than 12 April 1999.



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Patching things up on the home front

There must, by now, be a flourishing out-of-town superstore where DIY-minimal television producers can pick all the materials they need to enable them to go home and build themselves their very own prime-time DIY show.

DIY SOS (BBC1) — the first of another series, with yet another twist on the home improvement theme — Lowri Turner and Nick Knowles are part SAS-style decorators and part marriage guidance counsellors.

It's the gimmick of this show that the couple whose home is being renovated are on the brink of divorce owing to one partner's incompetence at DIY. By installing those flat-pack kitchen cupboards, or making the bedroom habitable, Lowri and Nick are saving marriages across Britain. It's God's work. The other gimmick is that viewers get to see the end of three houses showing

calamitously executed DIY and can phone in to choose which of these DIY SOSs will be answered. What is the point of this show? It's hard to tell. There's not enough DIY tips or design advice to make it instructional and it's hard to imagine TV viewers will respond to the telephone lines with the same zeal as they do to, say, the *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* telephone lines. Maybe it's just there to fill in part of the TV schedules that wasn't already filled with a home improvement show.

Next week's candidates include Lucy Wood, who is so sick-handed that she must think DIY stands for Demolish-It-Yourself; Margaret Knight, whose husband won't connect her shower; and Yvonne Ferguson, whose husband has built an extension to the house but hasn't yet got around to building a door into it. Why don't these cheap-skates just call in a reputable builder to finish off the job properly?

Now, any TV producer looking for a more intrepid renovation challenge might care to take a look at *The Last Train* (ITV), a sci-fi drama which doesn't provoke the traditional reaction when watching sci-fi on TV of forcing you to watch through parted fingers (not because you're scared, obviously, but because you aren't look for fear that the next scene will be more preposterous than the last one).

In *The Last Train* the world has been ravaged by a meteorite. There's not a building or human being left standing. The only apparent survivors are a handful of men and women whose Sheffield-bound train carriage was shielded from the blast by being halfway through a railway tunnel when the meteorite struck.

"Our challenge this week," Lowri and Nick could say, "is to tidy up this awful mess. Now, God took six days to build the world from

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

scratch. We're on a skimpier budget and tighter deadlines, so we're hoping to do it in five. To give us a helping hand we'll be using quick-drying emulsion instead of gloss, followed by a fast-drying, water-based varnish — just like we did on those bedroom cupboards we spruced up last week. Phone and tell us where you'd like us to start: if you'd like us to redecorate Europe first, press One. For

Africa, press Two. If you would like us to make transforming Asia our priority, then press Three."

Did I mention that the meteorite was "the size of Birmingham"? (Doesn't that place just always spell trouble?) Well, so far — there are five more episodes to go — the train passengers have just melted out of their cryogenic frozen suspension to discover that there's no other sign of life apart from several savage dogs.

There's a policeman, a thief, a mother with two children, a pregnant woman, a woman from the Ministry of Defence, an elderly lady — all pretty ordinary folk, none of them scientists, who look out across the newly barren horizon and announce: "If I'm not mistaken, this devastation is the result of a meteorite the size of Birmingham crashing into Africa and unleashing tidal waves that have caused binomial dispractor ripples across the Earth's surface."

They are strangers to each other, suddenly forced to rely on each other to survive in a world plagued by acid rain, hungry dogs, and no convenient pizza delivery services.

The author Matthew Graham, who wrote two series of *This Life*, is obviously a fan of all those John Wyndham adaptations and *Quatermass* films. And he has adopted their trick of inflaming the eeriness of his story by planting it in familiar surroundings rather than on an unknown planet inhabited by creatures who all look like David Mellor.

Frankly, not all that much happens in this opening episode, which, paradoxically, makes it more seductive than if it had contained dozens of subplots and encounters with spooky Meliorities. As long as Lowri and Nick don't turn up in their overalls, then it looks very promising. Watching just 40 minutes of

American TV politics in *Battle For Congress* (BBC2) — the first of Ann Parisis's fascinating two-part documentary following last autumn's contest between the Republican and Democratic candidates to represent California's Santa Barbara district — made you grateful that British election campaigns are limited to three weeks and that commercial TV and radio stations are not crammed with contrived electioneering commercials by the rival candidates.

You got a clearer picture of what made the candidates tick and what they stood for from watching them relaxing at home than you did from their TV commercials. Of course, there is one way of using television to reveal politicians' true natures while simultaneously giving us handy tips on how to lay a laminate wood floor. But no doubt some TV producer is already working on "DIY MP". At any rate, let's hope not.

- BBC1**
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